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MARCH 2003

ISSUE 02

INSIDE!

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ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

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## ZELDA EXPLODED!

FIRST PLAYTEST INSIDE!

YEAH, IT'S A TOON, BUT HOW DOES  
IT PLAY? FIND OUT...

RATED AND TIPPED

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## DEVIL MAY CRY 2

STOP! DON'T BUY THIS GAME UNTIL  
YOU READ OUR IN-DEPTH REVIEW!

FIRST REVIEW PLUS TIPS

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## XENOSAGA!

ROBOTS! BABES! ROBOT-BABES! NAMCO'S EPIC RPG IS  
STUNNING. FULL REVIEW AND TIPS INSIDE

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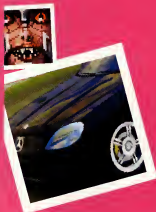
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2003 MAR | ISSUE 02

GET MORE FROM YOUR GAMES

# GMR



DEVILS!  
GANGSTERS!  
ROBOTS!  
WELCOME  
TO ISSUE 2  
OF GMR.



➔ After the applause, backslapping, all-night raves (daringly capped with *Scrabble* afterparties), and death threats from the premiere issue have subsided, Issue 2 creeps up on you like a Ferrari on a salt flat. Whoosh. Here it is.

If you've just turned 9, you might like to know that GMR is the newest, freshest videogame magazine on the block. We cover every game console and the PC, and we're a comprehensive buyer's guide designed to shine a bright light on all games worth your cash—and an even brighter one on those that certainly aren't. We'll even give you tips and pages of codes, simply because we can.

So, what's Issue 2 got going for it apart from Caroline's staff photo? In three words: devils, robots, gangsters. Capcom's *Devil May Cry* sequel summersaults into our *Reviews* section, gets rated, and then backslaps into four pages of strategy.

Meanwhile, Namco's wonderful robots-and-babes RPG, *Xenosaga*, jets into the top spot [p. 54]. Brit gangster game *The Getaway* struts in, looking dapper in a Paul Smith suit (before shouting "Fackin' ell!"). And Nintendo's Disney-like *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* sails in from Japan and cutesy-fies all it touches (though, I notice, staff writer Andrew Pfister remains unchanged). Oh—and we speculate wildly about PS3. Just for a laugh.

So, there you go; we're off and running. Well, if we're not, then certainly jogging and threatening to break into a sprint at any moment. You know. I've had to.

—Simon Cox, Editor-in-Chief  
(Cold, er, lamping)



## PINCHED NERVS: JAMES MIELKE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Likes his hats: Extra large Milky would like to say that he loves jazz, his new TV, and the stylish Blow-Up poster he bought in Japan. He would now like for you to leave his office.



## SKULL CRASHER TOM PRICE NEWS EDITOR

Wishes he had: Four ears Tom's corner of the office is an overwhelming cone of sound—denser than the blackest hate and filled with more rap than a Hallmark Card shop. What?



## DOUBLE O.P. TRIPLE DUNK GERRY SERRANO ART DIRECTOR

He's got somethin': For yaaaaa! A recent transplant from the sugar-cane fields of the Philippines, Gerry has a great sense of humor, often laughing right along to jokes that are, primarily, about him.



## SUPER BLUE DELICIOUS DAVID CHEN MANAGING EDITOR

Footloose: And fancy free David loves nothing more than a tasty Jamba Juice, a hot lunch, the morning paper, and some comfy slippers. The second-tallest Asian on staff, David lives the good life.



## GLIMMER BEARS ANDREW PFISTER WRITER

Silent. But deadly Tom used to make funny jokes about the new guy, until the new guy showed up for his first day of work. Now, Tom steers wild when the *Fist* comes lumbering by.



## SWEET SOUL SISTA CAROLINE KING DESIGNER

Favorite four-letter word: Gosh The baked goods dried up once she realized she was working with a pile of jerks. Now, Caroline spends most of her time passing notes to Tom. Like he can read.

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# POST

ISSUE ONE PROVED, IF NOTHING ELSE, THAT IF YOU WANT TO COURT CONTOVERASY, JUST PAINT A LIST OF GAMES—OH, AND THAT MILKY HAS AT LEAST ONE DELUDED FAN. EXPRESS YOURSELF...

## ZIFF DAVIS EDITORIAL DEATHMATCH

Hey guys, I was just wondering—since Ziff Davis has so many magazines now, why not have them compete in an annual death brawl, where each magazine's team of blood-lusting editors can fight one another and win the love of Mr. Ziff Davis (if there is one, and if he/she/it is

capable of love). Anyway, just thought it might be a good idea. Oh, and if you need a ref, look no further than Gary Coleman—that '80s child actor will do anything for money.

P.S. I think Shoe from Team *EGM* would win. Have you ever looked into his eyes? The guy's crazy!

Philip Franco

Interesting idea, Philip. Of course, *GMR* would win each and every one of those matches in a walkaway. We roll like that. Here's how the matches would most likely break down:

vs. *EGM* - They may outnumber us, but they're soft. Especially Shoe.

vs. *OPM* - The highlight of this match would be Caroline beating Todd Zuniga's ass. Pretty girl vs. pretty girl. The main event pits Brit on Brit as Simon and John Davison have a punch-up about soccer and get sauced on warm beer.

vs. *CGW* - *GMR* cruises through this one, despite the rain of blows from canes and oxygen tanks from Jeff Green and the other old PC-gaming farts.

vs. *XBN* - They've got an irritable Filipino art director, we've got an irritable Filipino art director. The difference? Ours is C-R-A-Z-Y.

vs. *GameNow* - Phil Theobald may be wily, but he has an Achilles' heel: yummy baked goods.

## XBOX2?

Congratulations on your new magazine. I have a couple of questions for you.

1) Do you think the second generation of Xbox games will help Microsoft close the gap that exists with the PS2?

2) How likely is Microsoft to make an Xbox2 that plays only games and DVD movies? (I guess I want to know if you think they will try to integrate Web TV or some of their other projects into the next version of Xbox?)

mad-rebel

It depends on what those second-generation games are, really. Multiplatform ports aren't going to cut it, as you can already buy those games for other systems. The key is nabbing the mainstream-friendly exclusives. Microsoft needs to give people a compelling reason to invest in an Xbox instead of a PS2. Honestly, though, this generation gap is more of a canyon. If you want to cross it, you'll need a game that goes Evel Knievel-style sequined jumpsuit, rocketcycle, out-of-control fireball on the sales charts. Can *Halo 2*, *Fable*, or *Ninja Gaiden* be that game? Probably not.

As for Xbox2, Microsoft will continue to focus on games, but we're still unsure if the whole multimedia convergence thing is going to take off. Xbox2 will certainly have a larger hard drive, so maybe we'll see a Tivo-esque digital video recorder and/or an MP3

jukebox—which would be rad for parties. That's right, we just said "rad."

## GOT MILK?

To James Mielke, aka The Milkman,

I have been a subscriber to *EGM* for two years now, and I will continue to read it for, like, ever man. But when I turn to the Reviews section each month, it is your reviews that I count on the most. You and I like the same games. When I read in issue #163 that you were moving over to work on this new magazine, *GMR*, I was like, what the hell? But then I calmed down and realized that that's not so bad after all. It just means I'll have to subscribe to one more magazine this year. Oh yeah, one last thing. What the hell is a *GMR*? Does it mean "Gives Mad Reviews" or "Gamers' Maximum Rave" or just "GaMeR"? No, I bet it stands for "Give Milky a Raise." Yeah, that's it.

E-mail address withheld.

## LESS ADS? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

I jumped on the *GMR* train at the very beginning with issue No. 1, and I just finished reading it. Let me say this, I LOVE IT. *GMR* will be the only game magazine I get—that is, once my subscription to *EGM* runs out. Kudos on the great premiere issue, and I commend your entire staff on its hard work.



Photo: Sara Flinn/About-Ed-Hey

## WRITE US: GMAZIFFDAVIS.COM

However, I have one concern with *GMR*. I'm asking you here; in fact, I'm BEGGING you here not to let corporate greed blind you by allowing an enormous number of ads to take over the pages of this great magazine. A few ads are fine, even preferable, but having to flip through too many drives me insane! As long as this is not allowed to happen and the staff keeps up the great work, I can continue to look forward to receiving many future issues of *GMR*!

Ki-zuki Suzuki

Look people, I know you don't like sifting through ads to get to the sparkling content that makes *GMR* so great, but understand this: Ads make this magazine (and pretty much all magazines, for that matter) happen. From your friendly editorial staff, to the production department, to the gal who

2. Your Five Least-Exciting Prospects article includes "GTA clones." You state that "publishers are showing their cluelessness in thinking they can cash in by doing cheap knockoffs." And in the same article, you call *Driver 3* a clone of *GTA3*. Well, for your info, *Driver 2* was out before *GTA3*, and that would make *GTA3* more of a *Driver* clone rather than vice versa. And, I'm looking forward to *Driver 3*, *True Crime*, and other *GTA*-like games, because I honestly don't think *GTA: Vice City* is as good as *GTA3*, and I think that other developers could make a better game. Mafia, for example, is much better than *GTA: Vice City*, and if the developer used more openness and more side missions in a game of its caliber, it would make *GTA3* and *Vice City* look as bad as the original *GTA*.

3. Your review of *The Sims Online* and the PS2 version of *The Sims*. Now, everyone

*Half-Life* would definitely be on it, as would games like *Doom*, *Fallout*, and *Civilization II*. We had to put a time cap on it; otherwise, the list would have been completely out of control.

## SOMEBODY NEEDS TO RELAX

I think you have a serious credibility issue to overcome, at least in my mind. In your Top 50 for 2003, you put *Zelda* at No. 18. That's ridiculous! Now, I can see how it may not be No. 1—*Halo 2* is a fine enough choice. And, given that it is a matter of opinion, I could PERHAPS accept it not being in the top 5. But No. 18? Come on! Everyone knows that if *Zelda* is not going to be the game of the year, it will be in the running.

Julian Velasco

If you were over here playing that, you would be asked to leave. Actually, we play a lot of music around here. Tom and Caroline have been krunking the new *Jurassic 5* album; Mielke's got his deep house techno trance going on; Simon blares Coldplay (what can you do, he's English); David and Pfister lean toward indie rock and alternative, especially Modest Mouse and Radiohead; and Gerry listens to lots and lots of Patsy Cline. Then he cries for hours.

## FATHOM IT

I cannot fathom the possibility of this typo, but in your Top 50 Most Exciting Games article, you have listed No. 15, *Final Fantasy X-2*, as supported on PC and Xbox. PLEASE TELL ME THIS IS A TYPO!!!!!! Where is the PS2 listing, or is Square selling out on us?

Concerned PS2 Worshipper

Yep, our bad. It should've said PS2. Pfister will be punished. ☹

WHAT THE HELL IS A GMA? DOES IT MEAN "GIVES MAD REVIEWS" OR "GAMEAS' MAXIMUM AVE" OR JUST "GAMER"? I BET IT STANDS FOR "GIVE MILKY A RAISE."

makes high tea for Simon twice a week, dozens of hardworking people put their blood, sweat, and tears into producing this magazine, and they can't do it for free.

## WHAT A HATER!

Please stop making your magazine! Your magazine was a good laugh, but seriously, you guys are the worst game reporters and reviewers I have ever read. Here are only a few examples of what makes your magazine a load of garbage.

1. Your Top 50 PC Games article failed to even mention *Half-Life*, the No. 1-rated game by many other magazines and one of my all-time favorites. And yet games like *Sacrifice* and *Serious Sam* were included in your top 50. Really? Good games no doubt, but not nearly as great and groundbreaking as *Half-Life* was.

is entitled to their own opinion, but after reading mediocre reviews from everywhere else and trying the game myself, I have determined that your reviews are biased and that you guys are just trying to sell EA's products so you can cash in on the overpriced trash it has turned out to be. *The Sims* was a good game, but it's been overdone and undernourished, and it's time for it to just stop altogether.

TAZ

You're right, uh, Taz: Everyone's entitled to their own opinion. And we will agree with you on one point: *Half-Life* is one of the best PC games of all time. But the reason it didn't make the list, along with a lot of other games, is that the list represents the top 50 recent PC games. The list goes back only to 2000. If it were the top 50 PC games of all time, then

*Zelda* has had enough hype, including in this very issue. Yeah, we know it's going to be the straight bomb heyze; otherwise, we wouldn't have put it in our top 20. No. 18? Ain't nothin' wrong with that.

## LOUDER THAN BOMBS

Hey, what music have you been listening to back at the *GMR* offices if any! If I were over there, I would be blasting System of a Down's *Steal This Album*!!!!!!

Francisco Santelli



## [SHORTS]

## Linkalicious

➔ Is everybody at *GMR* excited to play *Ocarina of Time* on their Cubes?

— Jeff Daniel

## Scrupalicious

➔ The quality and overall scrumpiousness of the magazine is fantastic.

— Martin Dessart

## Hairalicious

➔ In an age of whiz-bang visuals, it's hard for a game to get noticed if it doesn't have bump-mapped, pixel-shaded, real-time, volumetric chest hair. — Dustin Quillen

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# LIGHT IT UP!

NINTENDO'S SPECIAL PROJECT OPENS UP OUR EYES

FROM JAPAN

Prepare to kick yourself in the ass for buying a GBA too soon. While this may look like some sort of cell phone from hell, it's actually the new Game Boy Advance SP. Rumors have been flying for months about a new, backlit version of Nintendo's latest portable, but as you can tell from this picture, that's only half the story.

Rather than slapping together a lame GBA upgrade, it appears Nintendo has reinvented the wheel. In addition to the

sleek lines, someone was listening to all those complaints about the original GBA—most notably, the lack of back-lighting and rechargeable power supply. How else can you explain the huge number of third party add-ons and conversion kits designed to address these flaws?

While unconfirmed, Nintendo promises that the built-in rechargeable lithium-ion battery will power GBA SP for a whopping 18 hours or, at the flip of

a switch, light the screen for 10 hours. Another benefit of the compact design is that the screen remains covered when not in use. In short, a whole lot of peripheral makers may be left out in the cold with this new handheld, but it looks like you won't be disappointed. GBA SP will be available in two colors (cobalt and platinum) and will likely be well worth the \$99.95 price tag when it becomes available on March 23. **E**

—Darren Gladstone

## SP HANDS-ON!

CHRIS JOHNSON HAS THE SCOOP...



The design feels uniquely Game Boy. It's similar in look and feel to the original, but it bends in the middle and is much thinner. The compact design makes it easy to fold up and slip in your pocket like a cell phone, and it's as easy to hold as any previous Game Boy model. The L and R buttons are small, but the tips of your index fingers fit on them perfectly. The SP's front-mounted light illuminates the screen perfectly in any lighting condition, without glare. There's no headphone jack and the only real change is the light, but those are minor complaints. **C**

—Chris Johnston, EGM



# RATED 'M'

## DOAX VERSUS THE ESRB

NEWS

Eagle-eyed readers of GMR01 noticed that our review of *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* marks the game with a Teen rating. At press time, Tecmo was confident that would be the rating delivered by the ESRB. So, imagine our surprise when we learned that *DOAX* had, in fact, not received a Teen rating, but had been rated Mature instead.

"We fully expected *DOAX* to receive a 'T' rating from ESRB," said Tecmo's director of marketing and sales, John Inada. "I guess we underestimated the degree of sexuality in the game. We considered appealing ESRB's decision, but recognized that our ability to make a judgement on the topic of sexuality has been compromised from working on this controversial game everyday for so long. We have become so accustomed to seeing scantily clad girls that we decided to trust ESRB's decision to give *DOAX* an 'M' rating."

According to Patricia E. Vance, president of the Entertainment Software Rating Board, "ESRB ratings are based on reviews of actual game footage by specially trained raters who come from all walks of life and have no ties to the video and computer game industry. Before

making a decision about a rating, raters examine each game's most extreme content and study its context and overall intensity. Finally, the raters apply their training and their own good judgment to recommend the rating they believe will best serve consumers. Ratings become final once a consensus is reached.

"After evaluating the totality of [*DOAX*'] content [which includes some female nudity and sexually-charged themes throughout gameplay], our raters concluded that an M-rating was warranted."

"Independent research shows that the vast majority of American parents agree with ESRB ratings. In fact, when parents disagree with an ESRB rating, they're just as likely to have thought the rating was too strict as they are to have thought it was too lenient."

While fair, this explanation surely won't satisfy younger gamers in areas where, say, Wal-Mart won't stock the game. We at GMR maintain that the game's sexuality is far less overt (or gratuitous) than that in games like *BMX XXX*, but regardless, the lesson learned is: boobies beware, an M-rating is lurking around the corner.   
 @ James Mielke

## GAMEPORT VITAL GAME INFO, NOW BOARDING.

### ✈ Arrivals COMING SOON

SYSTEM	ETA	TITLE	HOW HOT?
PS2	FEB	FINAL FANTASY XI It's still not completely official, so expect delays.	★★★★
PC	FEB	UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING One of the hottest first-person shooters slated for 2003.	★★★★
PS2	FEB	MIDNIGHT CLUB II The first rule of Midnight Club is...	★★★
GC	MAR	THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER Check out our preview a few pages down that way.	★★★★★
PS2/XB	MAR	MALICE Speak softly and carry a big hammer.	★
PS2/XB	MAR	NBA STREET VOL. 2 We learned our magazine writers' on the street, ya.	★★★★
PC	MAR	TRON 2.0 If you don't remember <i>Tron</i> , go rent the DVD. Now.	★★★
GC/PC/XB	MAR	RED FACTION II More busting gaping holes in walls.	★★
GBA	MAR	SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2 A puzzle game that even your mom can get into.	★★★
PS2	MAR	AUTO MODELLISTA The first of hopefully many PS2 racers.	★★★
PS2	MAR	FUGITIVE HUNTER Go all Navy SEALs go into the bounty-hunting business?	★
XB	MAR	RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN How many virtual Nazis have been slaughtered?	★★★★
PS2	MAR	DEF JAM VENETTO Finally, we'll find out who's the better man: Method or Red.	★★★★
PC	APR	DEUS EX 2 J.C. takes on the Illuminati once again.	★★★★
PC/XB	APR	SEA DOGS 2 Sailing, takes us away to where pirates hide their booty.	★★
GC	APR	IKARUGA We missed Radiant Silvergun, so Ikaruga will have to do.	★★★★

### ✈ DEPARTURES OUT NOW

SYSTEM	TITLE	GMR SCORE
XB	DEAD OR ALIVE: XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL Let me buy that thong!	8 <sup>HD</sup>
PS2	WAR OF THE MONSTERS Destroying entire city blocks makes us feel big and stuff.	9 <sup>HD</sup>
PS2	THE SIMS The PC-gaming smash hit loses nothing in the translation.	9 <sup>HD</sup>
PC	THE SIMS ONLINE Only 90,000 people bought it the first 2 weeks. Only.	9 <sup>HD</sup>
XB	PANZER DRAGON ORTA The return of a cult classic makes all of us happy.	9 <sup>HD</sup>
PC	ASHERON'S CALL 2 Why wait for E3 when this is up and running already?	8 <sup>HD</sup>
XB	JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST Slashing through waves of Stormtroopers is just plain fun.	7 <sup>HD</sup>
GC	METROID PRIME We're still playing it, so we'll keep talking about it.	10 <sup>HD</sup>
PS2	EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES A new generation of hopeless addicts is born.	8 <sup>HD</sup>
GBA	THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST This one wasn't 'realistic' either, so get over it already.	9 <sup>HD</sup>
PS2/GC/XB	BMX XXX If we see you playing this game, we will punch you.	4 <sup>HD</sup>
GC	SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS A refreshing alternative to FF, and better in some ways.	9 <sup>HD</sup>
PC	SIMCITY 4 Design sweet systems to your heart's content.	8 <sup>HD</sup>
PS2/GC/XB	NCAA COLLEGE BASKETBALL 2003 Is it time for March Madness already? Almost.	8 <sup>HD</sup>
GBA	A LINK TO THE PAST/4 SWORDS Four people, four GBAs, too much fun.	8 <sup>HD</sup>
XB	THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS Game, Gem! You just slapped the hell out of that Orc!	7 <sup>HD</sup>

For more info on how the ESRB rates games, visit: [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)

# Thrilling living room rides are back!



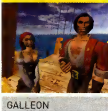
Finally, RollerCoaster Tycoon™ for the Xbox™ video game system



Mild Violence

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INFOMANIA!  
THE LATEST ON...

GALLEON

Color us worried. *Galleon*, the brightly colored and graphically stylized swashbuckling action/adventure game from Toby Gard—one of the original creators of that swashbuckling wench Lara Croft—has been delayed yet again. It's now expected later this year, but only for Gamecube and Xbox, the PC version has been cancelled.

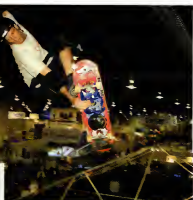
Considering the game was originally slated for release in 2000, that makes for one long development cycle. Gard's *Confound Factor* is in danger of having another Duke Nukem *Forever* on its hands.

If *Galleon* ever does come out, you can expect some pretty cool, albeit dated, graphics; cool animations; and a rollicking good story line. Pirates are cool—even if they are the mortal enemies of ninjas—and good pirate games are even cooler, although somewhat rare. That's why we were excited about *Galleon*... four years ago. But for now, that ship has sailed. ☹

CLICKS  
GO HERE NOW PLEASE

www.anthonysvitti.com  
/hiphopdictionary.html

Ever find yourself at the office rap battle, feeling lame 'cause you didn't know what your boss meant by "popping shots" or "rollin' on dubs"? Fear not: The Hip Hop Dictionary will have you dropping science like one fly follow in no time. ☹



→ CES finds a weird configuration of people, events, and technology. Where else would you find inflatable speakers, solar-powered GameBoys, and Tony Hawk and Shaq talking trash to Bill Gates over Xbox Live?

## VEGAS, BABY!

2003 CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW IS GEEK HEAVEN

NEWS

➔ Strange things have a way of happening in Vegas: Bill Gates taking on Shaquille O'Neal in *Midtown Madness 3* over Xbox Live (but failing to talk any smack). Sony president Kunitake Ando scoring points with Drew Barrymore by showing off a high-tech watch you'd expect to see in *Charlie's Angels 2*. And, us meeting more porn stars than you'd know what to do with (er, strike that last comment). Welcome to the Consumer Electronics Show.

More than anything, going to CES is like rubbing a crystal ball for all the gear you'll want to buy in 2003. One of the biggest trends of this year's show (and the past couple, for that matter) has been home networking. That's right—everything from your computer and television to the damn fridge, talking to each other and sharing data. Microsoft's new Media Center, for example camps a tiny PC in your living

room, where it does everything a TiVo, DVD player, and MP3 player do, plus links up with other computers in your house. Heck, Sonichue showed off a \$250 DVD player that'll let you hook up to your home network for music, videos, and God-knows-what-else.

Another cool thing to look forward to is Sharp's 3D TV. Still very experimental, this technology has curved TV tubes with emitters that allow you to convert any image into a 3D one, without having to wear those dopey glasses. For those who can't wait (and don't mind wearing some 3D specs), X3D has developed the Extreme 3D System. Despite the lame "EXTREME!" name, this cheap and affordable technology converts any 2D video source to ...you guessed it, 3D. There are several versions for PC and television.

Satek showed off its latest line of gaming peripherals, and by doing so

pointed out that it is, in fact, the No. 3 provider of game controllers, after Microsoft and Logitech. On the multimedia side, speaker maker Klipsch has finally jumped on the console bandwagon with 5.1 speakers specifically designed to add surround sound to gaming consoles like the PS2 and Xbox. Speaking of the PS2, people ignored those newfangled DVD players and televisions to catch a glimpse of Ubi Soft's *Splinter Cell* and *Everquest Online Adventures* on the PS2. Meanwhile, squirreled away off the show floor, news broke of Nintendo's latest Game Boy Advance, the SP, as the coolest surprise of CES.

If you can take anything away from CES, it's that games are no longer the upstart outsider of the consumer electronics world. Rather, they're a legitimate part of the digital home of the future.

☹☹\_Darren Gladstone and Will O'Neal

[TALENT]



Photo: Curtis Bauer

# \* TIM SCHAFER

DOUBLE FINE'S MAN IN THE SPOTLIGHT

➔ Tim Schafer is like the people you already know. He eats breakfast. He wears pants. But unlike the folks you know (who, frankly, are boring by comparison), Tim is the brains behind some of the best-loved and downright craziest adventure games of all time.

How crazy? One puzzle in Tim's *Day of the Tentacle* had you 1) travel to the past and 2) insert an alien tentacle design into Betsy Ross' first American flag as you could 3) use the tentacle flag as a disguise in a future controlled by fascist alien tentacles.

After eight years at LucasArts making hit PC games like *Tentacle*, *The Secret of Monkey Island*, and *Grim Fandango*, Schafer has taken his twisted genius and started his own game studio. Tim and his cohorts at Double Fine Productions are currently

hard at work on their debut title, a platformer (and then some) called *Psychonauts*.

Just like his previous games, Schafer's latest effort transcends its genre by being insane. Literally. The game's hero travels through the brainscapes of various deranged characters (e.g., a conspiracy nut, a bipolar has-been actress), helping them defeat their inner demons so he can proceed to the next person. Heady stuff. (Look for the Xbox-only *Psychonauts* this spring.)

Schafer is a self-deprecating man. Luckily, his colleagues have no compunction about singing his praises. When *Psychonauts* won an award at last year's E3, one judge said of Tim: "The bottom line is that he makes everyone else's games look so damn derivative." ☺\_Paul Byrnes

## SCHAFER'S GREATEST HITS

Schafer's years at LucasArts were as fruitful as any game developer has ever had. He was prolific in his writing, and was extremely successful as well. Here are just three of his best



### GRIM FANDANGO

Die de los Muertos meets Dashiell Hammett. One of the most original and funny games of all time, you'll have a hard time finding a PC gamer who doesn't list this on his all-time top 10. ☺☺



### FULL THROTTLE

This cartoonish-looking adventure wasn't much more than static screens and vividly animated characters. The sequel (which Schafer has no involvement in, unfortunately) will be a 3D affair, but with the same animated look. ☺☺



### DAY OF THE TENTACLE

The sequel to *Maniac Mansion*, and a classic in its own right, is full of evil tentacles, plastic punching-bag droids, and, of course, hamster love. ☺☺

## FOUND!

GMR SCOURS THE GLOBE



### PANZER KBOX (AND, UH, GLOOMY BEAR)

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Sega made only 999 of these limited-edition puppies, and they're only available in Japan, and they're already sold out. Which is why it's so very nice that we've taken a picture of ours for you to enjoy. Why don't we get this cool stuff in the States? ☺☺

## CLICKS

GO HERE NOW: PLODGM



www.there.com

Where is there? Or what exactly? It looks a bit like a Sims Online, but with more of a focus on community building, with some shopping thrown in to boot. Oh yeah, and rocket packs, too. Could be an Internet phenomenon, could be the next ea.com. Either way, go sign up for the beta. ☺☺

## [BLIPS]

### MS Flashes the Platinum

➔ Microsoft will release a catalogue of its successful (critically and commercially) first-generation games, for just \$19.99. Games on the list include *PGR*, *Amped*, and *Max Payne*. Sorry, no *Halo*. Maybe when *Halo 2* comes out.

### Myst Goes to the Net

➔ Will it be a slam dunk? We're betting yes: *Uru: Online*. *Ages Beyond Myst* will combine the purty fantasy worlds that sold a gazillion copies of *Myst* with cooperative play via the magical Internet. Sign up to beta test at [uruubi.com](http://uruubi.com).

### Getting Even More Medieval on your...

➔ Activision's critically acclaimed *Total War* series of strategy games is getting two additions: an expansion pack, *Medieval: Total War Viking Invasion*, and a full-fledged sequel, *Rome: Total War*. Sharpen your swords!



PLAYSTATION  
KNOWLEDGE  
THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU  
DON'T HAVE TO!

JOHN DAVISON

DER WILLE  
ZUM SPIEL

→ This month's GMR cover game signals more than just the emergence of a new RPG franchise. It's not only the first big epic role-player not produced by Square to emerge in some time, it's gaming's next big step toward artistic grandeur, and increased pretentiousness.

Start with the title: *Der Wille Zur Macht*. OK, 1) that's German and 2) it's a quote from the oft-misunderstood philosopher Nietzsche meaning "the will to power" and 3) that's German. So we get philosophy and a foreign language twice removed (German quote, Japanese game, English presentation) in one fell swoop.

Second, this is no lightweight game—not only because it has 80 hours of gameplay (though you can beat it in 50 at a push), but also because it's a seriously deep and involved experience. You can't just pick this up for an hour and then put it down for a week like you can with Harry Frickin' Potter. You need to spend some time with it.

Xenosaga is the beginning of something: not just of a game series that will keep you occupied for ages, but also of games being more thought-provoking. There's stuff to think about buried in all that CG video, and it's stuff that I hope will influence other developers. ☺

John Davison is Editor-in-Chief of the Official PlayStation Magazine.

## GMR CHARTS

THE TOP-SELLING GAMES FOR EVERY SYSTEM FOR DEC. '02

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

EBGAMES<sup>™</sup>  
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## TOP 10 ALL FORMATS

RANK	TITLE	FORMAT	SCORE
01	 <b>GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY</b> Guns, cars, drugs, porn, and Dennis Hopper. That, friends, is one serious recipe for success.	PS2	10
02	 <b>DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI</b> Every kid who couldn't buy <i>Vice City</i> must have turned around and bought this pretty decent fighting game.	PS2	7
03	 <b>SPLINTER CELL</b> A great Metal Gear Solid-type game on the Xbox. A PC version is due right about now...	XBOX	9
04	 <b>LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS</b> If you couldn't get enough of the movie, then hack and slash your way through a bunch of orcs.	PS2	7
05	 <b>MORTAL KOMBAT: DA</b> After all these years, <i>Mortal Kombat</i> can still make us smile. Maybe it's the fatalities.	PS2	7
06	 <b>JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE</b> Another good movie/game tie-in. If only we could have gadgets like that in real life.	PS2	8
07	 <b>MADDEN NFL 2003</b> Must be playoff fever, because <i>Madden</i> 's been out since August and it's still selling.	PS2	9
08	 <b>ATV OFF ROAD FURY 2</b> So much fun, we're still scraping the mud off our teeth.	PS2	8
09	 <b>TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON</b> The other Tom Clancy game on the list, this one's more combat oriented than <i>Splinter Cell</i> .	XBOX	8
10	 <b>LOZ: LINK TO THE PAST</b> Old school Zelda action for those who just can't wait for the new GameCube game.	GBA	10

## PS2 TOP 10

	SCORE
01 GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	10
02 DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI	7
03 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	7
04 MORTAL KOMBAT: DA	7
05 JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE	7
06 MADDEN NFL FOOTBALL 2003	9
07 ATV OFF ROAD FURY 2	8
08 TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON	8
09 KINGDOM HEARTS	8
10 SOCOM U.S. NAVY SEALS	9

## XBOX TOP 10

	SCORE
01 SPLINTER CELL	9
02 TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON	8
03 JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE	8
04 MORTAL KOMBAT: DA	7
05 MECHASSAULT	8
06 HALO	10
07 UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP	8
08 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	8
09 MADDEN NFL FOOTBALL 2003	9
10 MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE	8

## PC TOP 10

	SCORE
01 DAOC: SHROUDED ISLES	7
02 THE SIMS DELUXE	10
03 AGE OF MYTHOLOGY	8
04 THE SIMS: UNLEASHED	10
05 ZOO TYCOON	6
06 ROLLER COASTER TYCOON 2	7
07 THE SIMS ONLINE	9
08 MOH: SPEARHEAD	7
09 UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003	8
10 ZOO TYCOON: MARINE MANIA	6

## GBA TOP 10

	SCORE
01 LEGEND OF ZELDA	10
02 METROID FUSION	9
03 YU-GI-OH! ETERNAL DUELIST	5
04 KIRBY: NIGHTMARE	7
05 HARRY POTTER: COS	8
06 YOSHI'S ISLAND	9
07 SUPER MARIO WORLD	7
08 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	7
09 DBZ: THE LEGACY OF GOKU	5
10 SPYRO 2	4

## GC TOP 10

	SCORE
01 METROID PRIME	10
02 JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE	8
03 MARIO PARTY 4	8
04 RESIDENT EVIL 0	8
05 HARRY POTTER: COS	7
06 STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER	5
07 ANIMAL CROSSING	9
08 MORTAL KOMBAT: DA	7
09 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE	9
10 SONIC MEGA COLLECTION	7



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## LIGHTGUNS 'N' AMMO

BACK ON THE BEAT

NEWS

➔ The grandfather of lightgun games, *Virtua Cop*, is back in uniform—in Japanese arcades, at least—and gamers are lining up to plug virtual perps, lightgun-style. It's titled, surprisingly, *Virtua Cop 3*. Sega's AM2 division has drawn inspiration from the film *The Matrix*, giving the game a bullet-time pedal that lets you slow the action down and dodge bullets. The game is running on Sega's Xbox-based arcade hardware, code-name: Chihiro. While we could squeeze only one image out of AM2, for proof of the hardware's capabilities, one need simply look to *House of the Dead III*, which also runs on Chihiro. A pixel-perfect home conversion is likely to hit Xboxes by year's end. Check back next month for details on the game all AM2 fans have been waiting for: *Outrun 2*.

PC  
KNOWLEDGE  
THEY KNOW STUFF YOU DON'T HAVE TO

JEFF GREEN

I DON'T  
KNOW JACK

➔ If I did, then it wouldn't have taken me nearly a year to discover the awesome *Warlords: Battlemaster* 2, the best real-time strategy game I've played in forever. Yeah, better than *Age of Mythology* and *WarCraft III*. They have their moments, but *Warlords* is the first RTS since *StarCraft* to inspire the 3:00 a.m. "get your ass in bed!" bleat from my annoyed wife—always the sign of a classic game.

Speaking of shutting up, I'm about ready to unleash my trusty can of frail, geek-boy whup-ass on the next down I hear ranting about the supposed "failure" of *The Sims Online*. On brother: This game sold "only" 90,000 copies in its first few weeks—not bad by any standard, and pretty dang great for a massively multiplayer, subscription-based game.

Everyone keeps waiting for the big breakout massively multiplayer hit, the thing that casual gamers will play. But there's nothing casual at all about forking over \$10 a month. And think of all your clueless relatives who still barely know how to use e-mail or the Web. So keep it in perspective. This stuff takes time. And shut up about *The Sims* being overexposed, too. Would you rather go back to the Dark Ages of *Deer Hunter*? I didn't think so. ☹

—Jeff Green is Editor-in-Chief of *Computer Gaming World* magazine.

LSTATUESQUE  
AND THE MARIO GOES TO...

SHOWBIZ

➔ 2002 was a big year for videogames, but in 2003 pasty-faced producers, programmers, and artists will finally get their time to shine in the cultural spotlight. TNN, a member of MTV networks, has announced that it will produce and air the Video Game Awards in 2003.

Considering that videogames have recently graced every popular media outlet from CNN to Spin, from *Entertainment Weekly* to *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, it's no surprise that media moguls are eager to test these potentially lucrative waters with the ever-popular awards show.

Details including location, participants, and date have yet to be determined, but

the two-hour special, scheduled for the fourth quarter, will feature such awards as Best All-Around Badass, Best Kick-Ass Weapon, and Most Addictive. Says Albie Hect, president of film and television entertainment for TNN, "Let's face it, you won't see Best Total Annihilation at the Oscars!"

One wonders whether Vice City's Tommy Vercetti will take home Hottest Hero or Coolest Villain, or both.

So as not to completely alienate the TV-viewing mainstream, TNN will be sure to have B-grade celebrities and awards for Best Game Based on a Movie, Best Celebrity Actor and Actress in a Game, and Best Pro-Sports Game are also slated for inclusion.



→ "Yo, baby, you like gold rings?"

## [BLIPS]

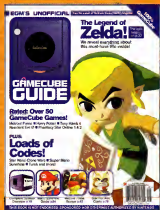
## Nightmare Creatures License to Ubi Soft

➔ Set in 19th-century Prague, *Nightmare Creatures* 3 puts players in the jughoses of a mystery-solving heroine who just happens to transform into some kind of insatiable werebeast at night. Arrow.

## Mortal Kombat: DA Reaches 1 Million

➔ And we don't mean fatalities. *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance* reached the 1 million mark in sales between its release date of November 22 and the end of 2002. Hmmmm, maybe there's something to this whole fighting game thing after all.

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NINTENDO  
KNOWLEDGE  
THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU  
DON'T HAVE TO!

PHIL THEOBALD

GBA ON  
THE CAN!

➔ When Nintendo first introduced its Game Boy back in 1989, we were all very impressed. Sure, it was a tad clunky for a "portable" system and it required a whopping four AA batteries and it had an unbelievably ugly pea-soup-colored display. But hey, you got Tetris for free. What more did you need?

Still, despite our blind adoration for the machine, everyone agreed that the Game Boy screen was kinda tough to see. If you weren't standing in direct sunlight with the screen exactly perpendicular to your line of sight, all you saw was a green blur. With each subsequent incarnation of the Game Boy, we dreamed of a means to light our darkest hour: Game Boy Pocket, Game Boy Color, even the Game Boy Advance—none had a screen that you could see in the dark. There was an indigo-powered "Game Boy Pocket Light" system in Japan, but since it had a weak glow that required two extra batteries, Nintendo wisely avoided releasing it in the States.

Now, 14 friggin' years after creating the Game Boy, Nintendo has finally developed a portable system with a decent light. The Game Boy Advance SP may look odd, but it works great, and now I can play me some Zeldo on the can, despite my bathroom's poor lighting conditions. It's about time. ☺

Phil Theobald is Reviews Editor at GameNave.

ZOOM, ZOOM, ZOOM  
CAPCOM SHOWS US WHAT'S UNDER THE HOOD  
NEW GAME ANNOUNCEMENTS

➔ GameCube owners worldwide are still rejoicing at the news of the five GC-exclusive games currently under development (*Resident Evil 4*, *Viewtiful Joe*, and so on), but Capcom has more than that up its sleeve. At its recent editor's day in Vegas, the house that *Street Fighter* built showed off a number of hot new games, aimed at all platforms. With racing game fans in mind, Capcom has partnered with Sega and Sony (who will provide the backbone of the online experience) to help make *Auto Modellista* accessible to everyone. The

game is to have both modern and broadband play, and come April the fast and the furious will be able to take their tricked-out rides online for the world to see.

While the world waits for the next true *Resident Evil* game, Capcom will unleash *Resident Evil Dead Aim*, a first/third-person action game (unlike their *Gun Survivor* series) this summer. Also shown on video was the upcoming *Megaman* for GameCube, Shing Mikami's new action game *P.N.03* (PS2), *Dead Phoenix* (GC), *Killer 7* (GC), and *Resident Evil 4* (GC),

which might not make it into gamers' homes until 2004.

Playable at the event was *Dino Crisis 3*, Capcom's dinosaur-zombie-horror-action game set in space, with jetpacks. Work continues on Capcom's survival-western (new genre term, we made it up) co-developed with Angel Studios, which was recently acquired by Rockstar. The game was playable, but as was the case the last time we tried it, it still needs a bit of work, though it already looks very good. The game we're all waiting for here at GMR, *Viewtiful Joe*, was playable

and looks like it could be the coolest side-scrolling beat-'em-up ever.

Outside the events of the editor's day, a little sniffing around brought us the knowledge that the *Maximo* team is hard at work on a sequel to one of 2002's nicest surprises, which was, er, *Maximo*. Nice to see the company supporting that fine effort. In other news, we hear that former *Alone In the Dark* developer, Darkworks, might be in cahoots with Capcom and working on a top-secret new project. More on that as we get it. ☺ James Mielke



## [BLIPS]

## Celebrity Deathmatch

➔ You know how long we've been waiting to see Ron Jeremy stick it to Carrot Top? At least since we heard the announcement of MTV's *Celebrity Deathmatch* from Gotham Games, which stars them both. Oh, yeah.



## Hori GameCube Controller

➔ In February, Hori will be releasing a new GameCube controller in Japan. Shaped like an SNES pad, it's designed for use with the Game Boy Player. Totally retro.



If you bought all these games, it would cost about **\$400.**

# WHY NOT TRY THEM ALL FIRST IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE FOR LESS THAN \$10?



**PLUS:**  
DEFJAM  
VENETTA  
AND  
SHAUN  
MURRAY'S  
PRO WAKE-  
BOARDER

## VIDEOS:

- 007 NIGHTFIRE
- GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY
- THE ZONE OF ENDERS 2

## BEHIND THE GAME:

- WAR OF THE MONSTERS
- RED FACTION II

## COOL MOVES:

- EVOLUTION SKATEBOARD
- NHL HITZ 2003
- ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS
- GRAVITY GAMES BIKE

## CODES:

- STUNTMAN
- AGGRESSIVE INLINE



**PlayStation**  
MAGAZINE

## FEBRUARY ISSUE ON SALE NOW

• THE GETAWAY • ENTER THE MATRIX • DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI • THE SIMS • SPLINTER CELL

## REVIEWS: HACK/INFECTION

• BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA • DISASTER REPORT • PRO RACE DRIVER • ISLAND EXTREME STUNTS • WORLD TOUR • DYNASTY WARRIORS: XTREME LEGENDS • SOCCER 2003 • NETPLAY CONTROLLER • QCAST TUNER

## PREVIEWS: FINAL FANTASY

X-2 • STARCRAFT: GHOST • DARK CLOUD 2 • THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS • JURASSIC PARK: PROJECT GENESIS • RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN • TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS • MIDNIGHT CLUB 2

## REPLAY: RATCHET & CLANK

• GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY • THE SIMS • NHL 2K3 • CONTRA SHATTERED SOLDIER • JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE • NBA LIVE 2003 • TONY HAWK PRO SKATER 4 • KINGDOM HEARTS • AND MUCH MORE!

# GAMEPLANNER

## FEBRUARY 2003

### WHAT'S UP WITH WHAT'S GOIN' DOWN...

01

Hmm, which to celebrate more: State of Emergency for Xbox or Nicaragua Air Force Day?

02

It's Groundhog Day, and no matter what that little bastard sees, it'll be cold for 20 more weeks. Deal with it.

03

Get in your car within a car, head on down to the store within a store, and buy the game within a game, *Jack for PS2*.

04

*Avaport Tycoon 2* for PC is in stores today. Get there at least three hours ahead of time (four if you're international).

05

*Unreal II* for PC, *Super Puzzle Fighter II* and *GT Advance 3* for GBA, *Heat* and *Summoner* for GC, and *Colin McRae* for Xbox come out.

06

Axl Rose gets a year older and takes a well-deserved break from not touring or putting out any albums.

07

*Shanghai Knights*, starring Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson, opens today. Long live the mismatched buddy picture.

08



12

Today, *Everquest*, *Midnight Club 2*, and *Disaster Report* for PS2, along with *High Heat Baseball! 2004* for Xbox.

13

09

Daemo and Goodfellas alum Joe Pesci celebrates a birthday today. He's funny like a clown. A violent clown that swears a lot.

14

Celebrate Valentine's Day by taking your sweetie to see the latest Marvel Comics movie, *Daredevil*. Girls like comic books!

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

15

Matt Groening, creator of *The Simpsons* and *Futurama*, turns 49 today. Didn't think he was that old, didja?



16

*Dark Cloud 2* for PS2 rolls into stores today.

17

18

Yeah, we told you Sony's *My Street* was going to be available last month. But, it's out for real, now. These things happen.

19

Today's business: *Conflict: Desert Storm* for Gamecube, *Yu-Gi-Oh!* for GBA, and *Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter* for PS2.

20

21

*Old School* opens today. A college movie starring Will Ferrell, Luke Wilson, and Vince Vaughn? Genius.

22

23

24

Help Joe Lieberman celebrate his birthday by writing to his office: 706 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510.

25

*Xenosaga* for PS2 and *Phantasy Star Online* for Xbox both ship today. Better set aside the next month.



26

Lara Croft debuts on PS2 in *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*.



27

28

No new games this weekend. Go outside and get some exercise.

XBOX

## KNOWLEDGE

THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



EVAN SHAMMOON

## MEGATON

As throngs of online forum dwellers await the next megaton announcement from the Japanese newswire, all eyes are focused on Microsoft. It is now abundantly clear that the company's current formula isn't working in Japan—Microsoft has sold only 300,000 Xboxes there, and only a strong, proven Japanese publisher will provide the console with the development firepower it needs to prosper in the region.

The rumor we've been hearing is that Sega is the company with crosshairs currently trained on its head. The hints (*Sega GT* and *Jet Set Radio Future* bundled with the console) and allegations (that numerous high-level meetings between the two companies have been taking place) are many.

It's difficult not to wonder about the consequences. Sega slowed its rate of innovation significantly over the past year. And while Dreamcast was blessed with titles like *Seamon*, *Samba de Amigo*, and *Rez*, the safer, posthardware Sega has relied on sequels and resurrected franchises. Maybe the support (read: influx of cash) from Microsoft would help Sega return to its creative roots. Or perhaps it would only hurry the gradual exiling of Sega's quirky brand of originality in the world of videogames.

I'm eager to find out. ☺

Evan Shammoon is Editor-in-Chief of Xbox Nation.

# THE ESRB VIDEO & COMPUTER GAME RATINGS

**Find out whether a  
computer or video  
game is right for  
your home.**

Learn more about the Entertainment  
Software Review Board rating system  
and how games get rated on  
[www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).



## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Titles rated "Early Childhood (EC)" have content that may be suitable for children ages three and older and do not contain any material that parents would find inappropriate.



## EVERYONE

Titles rated "Everyone (E)" have content that may be suitable for persons ages six and older. These titles will appeal to people of many ages and tastes. They may contain minimal violence, some comic mischief (for example, slapstick comedy), or some crude language.



## TEEN

Titles rated "Teen (T)" have content that may be suitable for persons ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violent content, mild or strong language, and/or suggestive themes.



## MATURE

Titles rated "Mature (M)" have content that may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older. These products may include more intense violence or language than products in the Teen category. In addition, these titles may also include mature sexual themes.



## ADULTS ONLY

Titles rated "Adults Only (AO)" have content suitable only for adults. These products may include graphic depictions of sex and/or violence. Adults Only products are not intended to be sold or rented to persons under the age of 18.



## RATING PENDING

Product has been submitted to the ESRB and is awaiting final rating.

This message is brought to you by the Editors of:

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# DARKWORKS

## ALIVE IN THE DARK

### FRANCE

➔ French developer Darkworks, whose most recent project, *Alive in the Dark: The New Nightmare*, was well received but not particularly successful, has been MIA since that project. GMR found the team to be alive and well in their Parisian studio, squirreling away on not one, but two, new games.

They couldn't disclose

what they were working on, but GMR suspects that one of these titles is Darkworks' previously announced *U.S.S. Antarctica*. An ambitious, high-concept effort, *Antarctica* is a futuristic squad-based action game in which the player controls a *Jin Rob*-like soldier, while a CPU-controlled partner works cooperatively with you to complete mission

objectives [you each work on one half of a split-screen]. As for the secret second game, we have yet to unearth any dirt on it, but we hope to learn more later this spring at the E3 convention in Los Angeles. And just which publisher is backing the development of *U.S.S. Antarctica*? Rumor has it that it's a company familiar with the undead. ☛



First-person shooter? Played out. Now how about a Flat Person Sim?



# REVIVAL

## IS IT NAMCO MONTH? IT MUST BE

### JAPAN

➔ Our sources, snooping around the ventilation ducts of Namco HQ, have informed us that the House That Pac-Man Built is working on a next-gen update to its classic TurboGrafx 16 series, *Splatterhouse*. In this time when gore rules the new school, the return of Rick, *Splatterhouse*'s chainsaw-wielding maniac anthero, could put the current kings of survival-horror (*Resident Evil*, *Devil May Cry*, *Silent Hill*) on their heels. In development inside the leathery, blood-soaked walls of Namco Japan, the game will likely not see the light of day until 2004. Still, are we pumped? If it means firing up that chainsaw, yeah, we are.

Next up: Better dust off that Guncon2. Namco's also working on its newest lightgun shooter, *Time Crisis 3*, which is in development for arcades. Nice, but can we get *Crisis Zone*?

And last, fists of fury, guns a-blazin', and some truly fancy pants: What else do you need in a beat-'em-up? Not much. And as you can tell from the screen above, Namco's new brawler, *Breakdown*, is played in first-person perspective. *Breakdown* features two main characters: a male who fights with his shiny fists and a no-nonsense babe who uses guns and knives. Think of it as a first-person *Fighting Force* that doesn't suck. This Xbox-specific action game will hit store shelves in Japan this summer and the U.S. in late 2003. ☛

# SEGA RALLY

## SEGA RALLIES AGAIN



➔ One of Sega's top internal development teams, Sega Rosso [Sega Touring Car Champ, *Star Wars Trilogy*], announced recently that it is working on a new *Sega Rally* game, which will be released in Japanese arcades sometime during 2003, and then eventually to consoles. (Sega Rally 2 screens shown above.) Is a U.S. release in the cards? Our hunch is yes. ☛

# SOUL CALIBUR II

## THE SECRET CHARACTERS OF SC II MAKE THEMSELVES KNOWN

JAPAN

➔ If you've been following the progress of the *Soul Calibur II* conversions for home, you'd know that Nintendo's Link was planned as a secret character for the GameCube version of the game. Well, Namco has released new details of the game, and it turns out that every version will get its own "secret" character. The game is scheduled to release in Japan this March, and later this fall in the U.S. The PS2 version adopts Heihachi Mishima, of *Tekken* fame, while Xbox owners get to play as Todd McFarlane's significantly more exciting Spawn. While Heihachi's inclusion is yawn-worthy, Spawn's appearance begs the question "Is Namco doing a Spawn game?" The answer is "maybe." ☛



➔ Link. It almost makes up for that cel-shaded crunk.



➔ Spawn. Lookin' danjassmn stick.

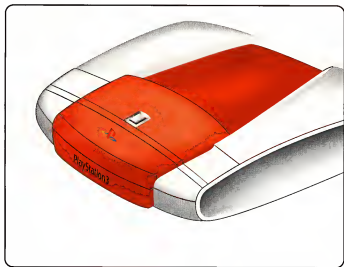
We're dying to kick butts with Link, and super stoked to take Spawn for a run. But Heihachi? Whatever. We'd rather play as Kionoa of the Wind.



➔ Heihachi. We're waiting.

XB  
PS2  
GC

# I DRE





# AM OF PS3

GMR DELVES INTO THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PS3 RUMOR MILL AND THEN GIVES UP. AND DESIGN'S ITS OWN. FOR REAL.

**➔ If you're planning to get a PS3 and remember coming up empty on PS2 launch day, you may want to get in line now.**

OK, that might be a little premature. After all, Sony hasn't officially announced a PS2 successor. And the PS2, despite its seat at the rear of the cutting-edge bus driven by Xbox and GameCube, just won the company a record-breaking 2002 holiday season, with more than 6.5 million units sold. The console also boasts some of the most impressive software sales in videogame history, thanks largely to exclusive ownership of, to paraphrase John Lennon, the bigger-than-Jesus *Grand Theft Auto* series. But that doesn't mean you can't get excited for Sony's next big thing.

Recent press releases and technology partnerships have led Net denizens and casual gamers alike to believe that a PS3 release is imminent, and that only a chuckleheaded fool would squander his earnings on—pfft!—a PS2 when such awesome power lurks just around the bend. But, according to Andrew House, executive vice president of Sony Computer Entertainment America, the company has "not made any announcements regarding the PlayStation 3," and maintains that "the PlayStation 2 is only two years young and has life yet to live."

Even though Sony hasn't made any formal announcements, reliable reports suggest the company is indeed working on the next round of videogame hardware. And, based on comments made by Sony execs and the time between the PS1 and PS2 releases, PS2 will need to hold its own for at least another couple years. That pushes any successor's release to at least 2004, or more likely 2005.

## CELLING OUT

So, why all the hubbub? In a word:

CELL. Early last year, Sony unveiled plans for a new piece of \$400-million technology under this cryptic name. CELL stems from a partnership between IBM and Toshiba to construct an extremely powerful chip-based device for use in a variety of Sony's electronic devices by 2005. CELL's basic principle involves integrating multiple chips into a single structure that would yield speed results between 100 and 200 times better than those of today's state-of-the-art chips, with up to 1,000 times more processing power than PS2. Most likely, CELL's presence would be felt in the next PlayStation, but Sony would not confirm any PS3 involvement at press time.

## CHIP MONKS

Further fueling PS3 fever, Rambus (known mainly for engineering high-speed memory chips and supplying chips for PS2 and N64) announced a partnership with Sony and Toshiba in early January and was drawn into the rumor fold. The tech giants licensed a pair of Rambus' high-speed, chip-to-chip interface technologies "for future broadband applications with CELL," according to a Rambus press release. Again, folks smelled PS3 applications.

## NO SUCH THING

Sony has spoken abstractly about its future consoles, and the PS3 name has come up on occasion. In February 2002, Sony Computer Entertainment President Ken Kutaragi spoke about some of what we could expect to see from Sony in future console designs. He stressed the importance of the Internet as a medium with "no boundaries based on physical constraint," and stated that, in a future that uses the Net's shared information capabilities, "there would be no such thing as PS3, no particular boxes called PS3, or no particu-

lar form called PS3."

We're going to go out on a limb and assume Mr. Kutaragi was speaking theoretically, and that there will be some kind of physical PS3 hardware based on the CELL technology. But, as for software...it's quite possible that the idea of buying a physical game disc will become obsolete by the time PS3 hits the market. Broadband Internet users can already share DVD-sized (the size of a PS2 game) quantities of information over the Web fairly easily. Why not abandon the costs and hassle of physical software distribution for the next round of interactive entertainment? The Internet is the medium," Kutaragi says, and given Sony's current PS2 online push and positive public response (tried finding a Network Adaptor in stock somewhere lately? Tough, ain't it?), we're inclined to believe him.

Not ready to wait two years to invest in a gaming console? If you can hold out until mid-2003, reports indicate that a PS2 price drop will probably occur around May. Look for an announcement from the Electronic Entertainment Expo that month.

## AND NOW

As Americans, it's our duty to reach toward some distant, nebulous technological wonder and give it a face by piecing together unsubstantiated rumors and amateur speculation before anyone else does. In that spirit, GMR, tired of waiting for Sony to spill the beans, has built its own PS3, using only the brains that monkeys are born with. You know, the smart monkeys that drink tea and wear human clothes in TV ads. Turn the page...

—Jonathan Oudiz

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF PLAYSTATION DESIGN



➤ The original Nintendo/Sony system was abandoned and...



➤ In 1995 Sony went solo with the PSX, which gave way to the...



➤ PS2, the black monolith, which debuted in 1999. Then in...



➤ 2000, Sony unveiled the sub-compact, cue PSX update, PSOne.

## LIVE IN YOUR WORLD

WE DREAM UP A PS3 OF OUR OWN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDY HOOPER

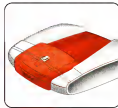
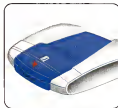
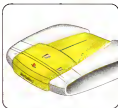


## THE GMR PS3

'IT'S ALIVE!' GITA'S IMAGINARY FRIEND ARRIVES

Right about now, you're asking, "What the hell is that?" And that's OK, because so are we, in a way. Our PlayStation 3 concept looks to trace a direct lineage from PSOne in appearance (we like the look of the PSOne), with a sleeker feel and similar dimensions (we want it to be portable). It's durable, with a white shell coated in clear resin for added protection. Apple Book style. On the left front is the ON/OFF switch, the EJECT button is front and center, and over on the right you'll find the RESET button. The PlayStation 3 logotype is emblazoned across the drive bay, and the scooped-out-looking side panel can be opened to reveal expansion ports that allow you to replace the hard drive or manually sync your GameBoy-style PSZero (see opposite page). The blue line across its back is a light that glows indescent blue when the unit is on.

Customize: The Mac really started something. Our PS3 comes in a range of primary colors



## THE SEVEN TECHNICAL WONDERS OF THE GMR PS3

1 GRAPHICS  
TOY STORY 2 IN-GAME.  
ANYONE?

When the PlayStation 2 was unveiled, we as gamers (and as journalists) were promised big things. Big, astronomical things. A leap. A revolution in the way videogame graphics were created. We were promised the long black hair of Final Fantasy VIII's Rinoa, flowing strand by strand throughout the Garden ballroom while the camera we controlled waltzed along with her in real-time. We were promised by Star Wars scribe George Lucas that the PS2 would have no problem handling the special effects

of The Phantom Menace. Sony itself promised the hardware was capable of producing Toy Story-level graphics. We were promised rubber ducks floating in bathtubs! What we actually got was considerably less. But, this time, things will be different. The PlayStation 3—at least the one we envision—will be able to deliver on all the unkept promises of its predecessor, and more. Theoretically, as much as 9 billion polygons per second.

2 CHIPS  
CELL PROCESSING WILL  
YIELD BILLIONS OF POLYGONS

We took a look at the patents Sony filed for its CELL processing architecture, and while it's certainly revolutionary, you're probably wondering what it really means for you, the consumer. One promise made at the PlayStation2 launch was "Toy Story in real time." Although the PS2 was capable of raw polygon counts that rivaled Toy Story, the overall image quality fell far short of Pixar's creation. One advance in consumer graphics technology is something called a "high-level shading language." A shading language describes to the graphics chip how to draw a certain effect; for example, a programmer could write a program that tells the chip how to draw polygons with a realistic wood effect.



# ...DREAM IN OURS



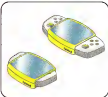
## PS2 ZERO HANDHELD

A PS2 THAT FITS IN YOUR POCKET.

After more than a decade of Nintendo having it all its own way in the handheld market, we think Sony will finally make its move with the PS3 launch. Our handheld gaming device would feature two mini analog sticks that pop out and up from the sides of the pack-of-cards-sized unit. The PS2 Zero itself would basically be a shrunk PS2, and the games, MP3s, and movie clips it would play would be downloaded wirelessly to the unit.

## MY PS2 Zero

Like the main unit, snap-on colored covers (cell-phone style) allow for customization. The unit is also edible. Actually, that wouldn't work. Scratch that.



Pixel's shading language, which the company has used for all its movies, is called Renderman.) We expect Sony to implement some form of this for use on the PlayStation3, allowing developers to create nearly photorealistic graphics.

## 3 NEW MEDIA

SONY IS BETTING BIG ON MEMORY STICK

We don't imagine Sony straying from the standard DVD format anytime soon. The thing is already packed with CELL processors, so a brand-new drive like a Blu-Ray might be a little too pricey. Since PS3 will be a media hub, not to mention installing games directly to the drive—so, say, at least 40GB of hard-drive space. But if we want a two-like function—and we very much do—we'll bump it up to 80GB. For our portable data purposes, we'll look no further than Sony's own Memory Stick.



## 4 HOOKING UP CONNECTIVITY FROM YOUR PDA TO YOUR PS2 ZERO

Our PS3 will connect to everything from your cell-phone to the PS2 Zero handheld console (see above) to a snap-on screen and other Sony products, such as the amazing little Clie camera/PDA. The unit also talks to your controller via wireless, Bluetooth network hook-ups. No more wires. Ever. For anything.

## 5 A/V CRISP HIGH-DEF IMAGES AND THE LATEST SURROUND

We don't have to worry about significant leaps in A/V output for a while. Our PS3 takes full advantage of HDTV resolution and perspective (more 16:9-ratio games, please!), and it can output Dolby Digital EX audio on the fly. It's cool like that.

## 6 GET IT TO GO PS3 ANYWHERE

Sure the GameCube has a handle, but it's about as portable as a Fibergig egg. You can take our PS3 with you when you go, thanks to



its small-notebook size, tough outer case, and LCD screen add-on.

## 7 WIRELESS NO MORE CABLES NO MORE WIRES NO MORE HASSLE

If you haven't yet heard of a little technology called Bluetooth, stick around. This wireless networking standard based on radio waves is going to be big, and our PS3 is going to help make it happen. Any electronic device that's equipped with Bluetooth can communicate with other such devices within a 10-meter radius. What does this have to do with gaming? How about wireless controllers? Transferring Memory Stick data over the air? Or having your PS2 Zero or PDA link up with your PS3 merely by being in the same room? And if Sony wants to get really ambitious, it'll have a wireless headset display to go along with the wireless Dual Shock 3. Radio Free PlayStation: it's Coming.

That's enough dreaming for one issue. Email us at [OMG@GAMERS.COM](mailto:OMG@GAMERS.COM) and tell us what you think of our PS3, or suggest your own...

## PS3 ESTIMATED TECH SPECS

CPU speed 4GHz

Theoretical maximum polys/sec About 9 billion (emphasis on theoretical)

Total system memory 512MB of "Yellowstone" Rambus RAM

Broadband engine Four CELL processors, 84MB of embedded DRAM capable of 1 trillion operations per second

CELL Fully scalable capable of 298 billion operations per second

Utilizer GPU Compiles our specialized CELLS

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### PlayStation.2

SKU	TRADE-IN TITLE . . . . .	U.S. CREDIT . . .	CANADIAN
230624-9	DEVIL MAY CRY 2 . . . . .	<b>\$30.00</b>	\$33.00
231147-0	DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI . . . . .	<b>\$28.00</b>	\$45.00
231252-8	EVERQUEST . . . . .	<b>\$30.00</b>	\$40.00
224317-8	GETAWAY . . . . .	<b>\$22.00</b>	\$45.00
223735-2	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY . . . . .	<b>\$30.00</b>	\$45.00
203366-0	SOCOM US NAVY SEALS . . . . .	<b>\$30.00</b>	\$37.00
216770-8	TEKKEN 4 . . . . .	<b>\$25.00</b>	\$33.00
226058-6	THE SIMS . . . . .	<b>\$30.00</b>	\$45.00
224797-1	YU GI OH . . . . .	<b>\$22.00</b>	\$42.00



SKU	TRADE-IN TITLE . . . . .	U.S. CREDIT . . .	CANADIAN
231139-7	LORD OF RINGS: TWO TOWERS . . . . .	<b>\$28.00</b>	\$45.00
224364-0	MARIO PARTY 4 . . . . .	<b>\$25.00</b>	\$37.00
220176-2	METROID PRIME . . . . .	<b>\$30.00</b>	\$30.00
220042-6	SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE . . . . .	<b>\$25.00</b>	\$37.00
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RELEASE | MARCH

# THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

DIRECTOR: GANAKUBO | CHARACTER DESIGNER: TAKESHI YAMAGUCHI | MUSIC: KAZUSHIGE NOZAKURA

## GNM GOES TO SEA AND TAKES AN ANIMATED LOOK AT THE NEW, NEW LINK

There was an area in the original *Legend of Zelda*, a nondescript stretch of beach on the eastern coast, where Link could hop on his trusty raft, then float over and collect yet another "Heart Container" to the extent of the high-seas adventuring, as there was important business to attend to back on dry land.

But in the back of your mind, a thought lingered.... What if the raft kept going? Seventeen years later, *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* takes you beyond the platform and out to the open sea. Much has been said about the latest *Zelda* incarnation since its dramatic and completely unexpected unveiling a couple years ago—some of it good, some of it bad. In anticipation of the coming release, GNM's been working through the English-impaired Japanese version so we—and by proxy, you—could get a solid idea of what to expect from the last and arguably the most controversial of the three "game masks" from Nintendo. Clear the lines and bust the main sail, we're off.

Life is a journey, not a destination. *Zelda's* overworld, like any good overworld should, connects the game's dungeons together to form one cohesive world. Only now, we move from the rolling green hills of Hyrule Field to the rolling blue waves of the ocean. As one might expect, Link's main mode of transport is by boat. But it's not just any boat. This one takes the form of a kindly red dragon who dispenses advice and fills in story details. Once you set sail, the sea is your playground. If you just want to cruise, waive the wind in the proper direction and take off. Acquiring

treasure maps and the grappling hook means you can search for buried goodies like heart container pieces and rupees.

It's not all smooth sailing, though: Scattered upon the seas are pirate outposts and roaming battleships, some of which are guarding an item of interest while others are just being pests. Getting bombs also adds a bomb-launching cannon to your ship, so you're not completely defenseless. You can also use the boomerang to fend off ill-wishers. And, lest you forget where you've been, tossing a handful of feed to a friendly fish will convince him to permanently mark down your current location on the world map. **4+**

**GNM SAYS** → The "bushy" Link is dead for a while, indeed, but do not be afraid: This is still *Zelda*. It just looks different. Totally, really different.

→ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥



→Boo not sail into the landmasses. Tornadoes are bad.

→Bombs away! Pirates are stationed all around the water.





→ From left to right: When you get the Wind Fish, you can modify it with a treasure-hunting craze tool. After finding treasure maps, you can use them to find treasure where to look. It's like the old game, only you can actually get hurt. The day/night cycle is mostly a cosmetic, peaceful, sure, but some background events would be triggered by the time of day. The Wind Fish is completely surrounded by water. Appropriate, we'd say.

## GRAPHICS

### JUST LIKE SATURDAY MORNING

→ "Zelda." It's an adjective so clever, 6.8 million message-board junkies in a rush to discuss the game all thought of it at exactly the same time.

Nintendo's graphical ball-and-switch sparked many spirited debates, and both sides have their points. But, regardless of which camp you reside in, after playing the game, we find it hard to deny that, considering what Nintendo set out to do, it did do in terrific fashion.

Wind Waker plays exactly as you'd expect a Zelda game to play, and the cartoon aesthetic is pulled off perfectly, with fluid animation, appropriate use of color, lighting, and shading, and creative character design.

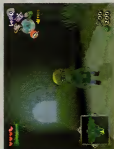
Whether you actually like the way it looks is another matter entirely. ■



→ The various fire effects are impressive.



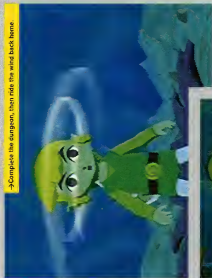
→ But the real eye-candy comes from the colorful bosses.



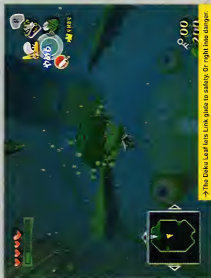
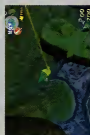
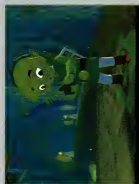
→ Behold, the many faces of Link. His expressive eyes let us know how he's feeling, how determined he is, even nod his head and look around at notable items...



→Complete the dungeon, then ride the wind back home.



→ Early in the game you'll be asked to visit a merchant who offers his services in the guise of a Game Boy Advance. Hook up your Game Boy Advance, and you can solve puzzles through the dungeons, setting bombs, collecting items, and more puzzle assistance.



→ The Deku Leaf lets Link glide to safety. Or, right into danger.

## DUNGEON CRAWLING 101 WHAT LIES BENEATH

➔ Sailing around and picking fights with pirate ships may be loads of fun, but the heart of any true *Zelda* game lies below, deep down in the dungeons. All dungeon maps feature different layouts and puzzles, but they each have the same basic progression: Find the map, find the compass, find the boss key, and somewhere in between, find the featured item, like the boomerang, grappling hook, or Deku Leaf. You'll usually find the item early on because most of the puzzles, pathways, switches, and enemies are designed around its use. For example, one of the earlier dungeons has various poles you could conceivably use to swing across gaps, but not until you find the grappling hook, which is also used during the eventual boss fight. And the bosses in this game...well, you have to see them for yourself. ♣

## DUETS

### A LITTLE HELP FROM FRIENDS

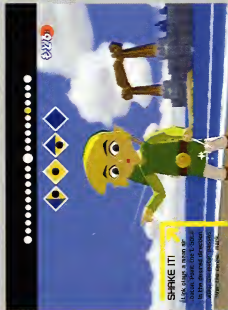
➔ Dungeons can be tricky places, but you won't always be alone. In one particular level, you'll have to team up with a little Deku seed guy who has been blessed with a leaf-propeller on his head. Link will get to a point where he can't go any farther, but playing the correct song with the wind baton will switch control over to Mr. Deku, who can then fly on over to where Link couldn't go and complete that part of the puzzle. He can fly for only a limited time, and if he's attacked, control will revert back to Link. ♣



# WIND BATON

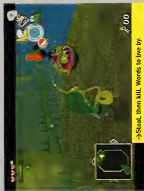
## IF LEONARD BERNSTEIN WERE CEL-SHADO

➔ That Wind Waker subtitle must mean something, right? Waking the wind is done with Link's new instrument of... instrumentation. Much like the ocarina, the wind baton and the songs it conducts have a variety of uses. First and foremost, you'll learn to control which way the wind is blowing. Without a strong tailwind, Link wastes precious adventuring time sailing adrift or barely moving at all. And, because the ocean map is so large, you'll want to be sailing at full speed as often as possible. Wind control is the first song type you'll learn, but as the game progresses, your musical library will expand to include other useful melodies. Songs are conducted in either three-, four-, or six-beat measures, and the C-stick moves the baton in time with the beat. The London Symphony it's not, but the purpose is served. **E+**

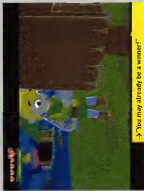


## INCOMING GAMES

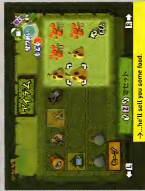
the legend of zelda: the wind waker



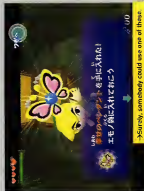
➔ "Skat, then kill. Works to live by."



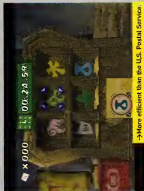
➔ "You may already be a winner!"



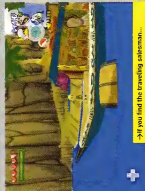
➔ "...he'll tell you some food."



➔ "Surely, somebody could use one of these."



➔ "More efficient than the U.S. Postal Service."



➔ "Did you find the traveling salesman...?"

## COLLECT-A-THON

STUFF YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO, BUT SHOULD ANYWAY

➔ It ain't so. Well, not entirely so. During his journey, Link encounters various items that he stores in a handy knapsack: bird feathers, butterfly pendants, enemy bolts, and colored blobs, just to name a few. These are obtained by happening upon them in dungeons, defeating certain enemies, or yanking them off mountains with your grappling hook. If fishing style, before you methodically dispatch the measlies. Of course the collection of these items and completion of these tasks are for the most part optional, but know you'll be missing out on good stuff like magic potions, treasure maps, and new sword techniques. There are also food items you can buy from a traveling salesman, whom you'll encounter hanging around island beaches and docks. These bags of food will let you take control over seagulls, make pigs dig up the ground, and get flying fish to mark your world map. **E+**

# ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER

CREDITS: PS2 DEVELOPER: KONAMI OF AMERICA DEVELOPER: KOEI

## FORGET ROBOTECH. ZOE 2 WILL FULFILL YOUR WILDEST ANIME FANTASIES

➔ The first *Zone of the Enders* met with mixed reviews. Jaw-dropping visuals, a flawless camera, and a silky framerate made ZOE the perfect PS2 showpiece, but complaints arose as players progressed through the game. A lack of variety and—more important—length left gamers feeling that Konami's ode to anime had not fulfilled its true potential.

It's not surprising, then, that the keyword for this striking sequel is "more": more weapons, more environments, more enemies, more story, more characters, more maneuvers, more effects, and...more gameplay. How much more? We've been assured that ZOE 2 will at least double in length over its predecessor.

The first ZOE cast you in the role of, Leo, a young boy fighting the forces of BAHARAM, a militaristic organization. Fortunately, Leo stumbled across Jehuty, an experimental orbital frame—Konami-speak for giant robot—loaded to the gills with powerful weaponry. This time, it's an ex-military man named Dingo at the helm. In changing the protagonist, Konami has wisely done away with the stifling protection of innocent lives and focused instead on the action.

The story is the stuff of archetypal anime (a tortured hero, the melding of man and machine), as is the gameplay (that is to say, combat), which deftly illustrates the phrase "fast and furious." The flawless control system remains unchanged, so both fans of the first game and newcomers to the series will

find themselves dashing, strafing, slashing and smashing in no time.

As before, Jehuty features two primary attack modes: Players can either attack from afar with a projectile weapon, or wade in and carve up the competition with a massive blade. Once again, Jehuty can also conjure up a big ball of energy to be hurled at more powerful foes.

And the robotic death-dealing doesn't stop there. Hold down the Attack button while dashing and Jehuty can lock on to clusters of enemies. Releasing the button unleashes a shower of laser beams on literally dozens of swarming antagonists in an orgiastic lightshow of absolutely anime proportions.

The ability to grab enemies in the first game was novel; the first few times, but tended to get lost in the fray. Now, hapless mechs can be swung around like bats. Better yet, players can grab and make use of the environment around them: Girders can be plucked and hurled like javelins or swung in a sweeping arc, and walls can be peeled off to use as shielding.

Slick, showy, and smooth-playing, ZOE2 looks to be nothing short of incredible. So far, all of the first game's shortcomings have been addressed; all that's left is to see if this game is substantial and not just another showpiece. Impress us, Konami. **B+**

**GMA SAYS** ➔ The best bits of ZOE, with none of the excess fat. We know they've got the gameplay down; let's hope there's enough of it.

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥



➔ There's certainly no shortage of opponents to be obliterated here, and they come in all shapes and sizes. In fact, right off the bat, you'll face off against swarms of smaller ships—a great way for rusty runners to get out and stretch their wings. It's also a perfect way to get acquainted with Jehuty's ability to unleash a volley of missiles.



## ROLL CALL THE PRINCIPAL PLAYERS

After a look at these ugly mugs, we're expecting nothing less than a sweeping story full of anime-style conflict, tough choices, and shocking surprises. Here's a primer to some of the *The 2nd Runner's* key players.

### DINGO

Dingo starts the game as a simple ice miner, but soon finds his destiny in the swarming Jehuty. But this natural warrior and leader of men has a troubled past: Dingo was once a member of BAHARAM, a Martian military regime led by...



### NOHMANN

The pilot of double, and commander of BAHARAM, Noermann's singular goal is the conquest of Jamnus, an invincible military fortress that will insure the victory of his organization. Desperate to locate Jehuty, Noermann dispatches...



### KEN

The pilot of orbital frame Andjet, Ken Marburu's mission is to capture Jehuty. Expect sparks to fly when this firebrand faces off against the usually ruthless Dingo. All red hair and attitude, Ken reminds us more than a little of...





## INCOMING GAMES

zone of the ender's the second runner

## HEAVY METAL!

FOUR REASONS WHY THE 2ND RUNNER WILL DESTROY ALL COMERS

## 1 » LOCK DNI

→ Thanks to the intuitive lock-on system and a lightning camera, mastery of the blade comes easily. Combinations are simple, and adept players will be able to segue from a brutal series of slashes into grabbing and then flinging some badass foe off into the horizon. Need a little precision? The Second Runner features a dedicated VR training mode, à la Metal Gear Solid 2 Substance.

## 2 » SUBWEAPONS!

→ Subweapons, which were woefully unnecessary and underused in the first game, have been revamped, so some intriguing abilities will be available for download, including spread shot, homing missiles, and the impressive-sounding Vector Cannon. (Trailers for the game have shown Jebuty going up against some very large ships.) Not enough for ya? How about the ability to teleport? That's right, teleport.

## 3 » HAPPY TAILS!

→ This game looks just as good in motion as it does on these pages. Every effect in the back seems to have been crammed in here, and then some. Lighting effects, particle effects, and vibrant "toon"-shaded smoke effects fill the screen. And then there are the trails, those glorious trails. Jebuty leaves trails, Jebuty's blade leaves trails, explosions leave trails, missiles leave trails—hell, even the trails leave trails.

## 4 » METAL CROOVI

→ ZOE2 features an impressive pedigree: The game is produced by one Hideo Kojima, the creative mastermind behind a little series called Metal Gear Solid. The uniquely inventive mechanical designs come courtesy of longtime Kojima associate Tetsuya Nomura. And first-time director Shinya Muraoka knows a thing or two about storytelling, too; he served as scenario director for both MGS and ZOE.



## VIOLA

The plot of orbital frame Hephaestus, the embittered and egotistical Viola was last seen, dead. The player's primary antagonist in the first game, Viola has seemingly survived, sinister smile intact, just in time to square off again.



## LEO STENBUCK

The old from Orbis has grown up; he now sports an aggressive air and a new critical frame runner to match. That, his frame, the 'V' Vector, transforms in cool enough, but did school Gradius fans will go nuts over the options and ripple beam. Check the other page for a peek.



## LLOYD

This creepy fellow is a loyal ORBISMAN RED man and knows Diego from his days as a boss pilot. Lloyd created the prototype frame Jebuty, which he manipulates remotely via the three rods that protrude from his skull (ouch).



## TAPER

Taper's bite is bigger than his bark. An arrogant soldier with the U.N. Space Forces, he's crucial to Diego's efforts later in the game. Taper pilots the Phantom, a standard military issue LZV that was the benchmark for mechs until the introduction of orbital frames.



RELEASE | MARCH

# TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN

 DEVELOPER PS2 DEVELOPER ACTIVISION  
 DEVELOPER K2

## NINJAS DID KILL BRUCE LEE. YOU KNOW.

➔ If 2002 was the year of the mech game, 2003 is certainly the year of the ninja. Although *Shinobi* set it off late last year, its release was merely a prelude. With *Ninja Gaiden* on the horizon and a ninja game from Namco somewhere over the rainbow, the time is ripe for *Tenchu* to kick things (and heads) off.

*Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven* picks up where *Stealth Assassins* left off, explaining exactly what happened to our hero Rikimaru, who seemingly perished under a cave-in of boulders and stone. Of course, all is not as it seems, and as *Wrath of Heaven* will prove, cats are not the only ones with nine lives.

With original developer Acquire working on the sequel to its sleeper hit *Samurai*, Activision has created a new Japanese development team, K2, to handle the coding duties on the new 'chu. Thanks to the team composed of former Square and SNK talent, *Wrath of Heaven* is easily the most accomplished-looking game in the series. And K2 has increased the arsenal to 30 diverse weapons and tools for our ninjas to use. Simultaneous splitscreen co-op play has also been added for multiplayer shenanigans.

The first game was atmospheric and well intentioned; the second, ambitious, but ultimately flawed and overly difficult. Can Activision nail ninjitsu the third time around? Check back next month for the full review. ☛

**GMR SAYS** → Two (or three?) ninjas make any party an instant A+. We have high hopes for the third installment. Do Rikimaru, go!

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥🔥🔥🔥



➔ One of the biggest improvements in the new *Tenchu* is the cooperative play, which lets one player play as Rikimaru, while the other manages Ayame. Ninjas are tough enough to deal with one-on-one. When you connect with a friend and tackle missions together, you're unstoppable.



READ MY SHORTS!

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥🔥

## BLACK HAWK DOWN

■ The gritty, visceral movie depiction of the Battle of Mogadishu is getting the digital treatment. *Black Hawk Down* is an FPS that puts you on the ground over "various" missions carried out by U.S. Special Forces during the 10 months they spent in Somalia. If this game punches us in the gut like the movie did, then it will be an experience that's with us a long time. (PC)





RELEASE | FEBRUARY

## MIDNIGHT CLUB II

► REVIEWER PS2 ◀ DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR GAMES ◀ DISTRIBUTOR ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO

## NEED SPEED? JOIN THE CLUB

➔ It was October 26, 2000, and a (then) wee company called Rockstar had just released a praise-worthy pair of racers that—unlike most PS2 launch titles—weren't updates to already-popular franchises. Irreverent and arcadey, *Smuggler's Run* and *Midnight Club* were as satisfying as they were straightforward. The "club" was the high-stakes world of illegal street racing—and now, you've got a second chance at membership.

As with the original *Club*, gameplay revolves around players searching the streets for a chump to dust. Once the race is on, it's up to the players to make their way through a series of checkpoints via any means possible. This time, the action is set

on the streets of L.A., Paris, and Tokyo, and players will definitely have to familiarize themselves with the areas before prowling these realistically rendered streets for pink slips.

Fans of Rockstar's other urban driving franchise will be thrilled: Motorcycles have made the cut. The not-quite-real-world vehicle roster has been expanded, and a colorful array of challengers await. Graphics, physics, and multiplayer options have been given an overhaul, and we anticipate more-detailed landscapes this time around. **B+**

**GMA SAYS** ➔ Racers on the wrong side of the law are common, but Rockstar's always had a keen grasp on counterculture cool.

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥

RELEASE | FEBRUARY

## RAYMAN 3

► REVIEWER PS2/BOX/PC ◀ DEVELOPER UBI SOFT ◀ DISTRIBUTOR UBI SOFT

## NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH RAYMAN

➔ When good Lums go bad, they infect other Lums, and soon the whole world is going to hell in a no-hands basket. Or rather, a no-limbs basket. The armless, legless French fancy, Rayman, is back and more extreme this time around. With new power-ups that give him cool new outfits and sneakers, and with requisite superpowers, Rayman is no longer just partially in your face, or even near your face, but squarely, perhaps even totally, in your face.

Seven of 56 lavishly crafted levels, heavy on the combat and occasionally on the psychedelic (surfing down lines of light to a disco beat at 100 mph is enough to give Timothy Leary flashbacks, if he

weren't so dead), were revealed to GMR. We can report that fans and detractors alike will be impressed.

Each world now has a wide variety of levels, and during the hands-on time we had with the game, we spiraled through the giant cogs and wheels of the Hoodlum tar in a spaceship, blasting enemies and scenery to bits, as well as used a first-person rocket to hunt targets. The emphasis is on action and exploration, but thanks to the stunning graphics, wandering about the worlds is a pleasure. **B+**

**GMA SAYS** ➔ If the game can stay light over so many levels, we're all about it.

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥

## READ MY SHORTS!

## RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR

■ The Xbox-exclusive edition of the popular PC shooter finds here B.J. Blazkowicz facing off against the gruesome results of Hitler's occult obsessions. The game's also caring to PS2 (as Operation Resurrection), but a softscreen co-op mode, Dolby 5.1 audio, and the ability to duke it out on Xbox Live should make *Tides of War* a hit. **B**



RELEASE | TBA

## BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

Platform: PS2/XBOX/PC • Developer: EMPIRE INTERACTIVE • Publisher: EUTECHNIX

HOGS AND HEIFERS. THERE'S NOTHIN' BETTER

➔ Ah, the open road. What could be better than living life in a big rig, making your way down the [groan] highways of life, your only restrictions being toll booths, flat tires, and sky-rocketing diesel prices? And what of roadside rest stops? Yeah, baby. Beef jerky and a tin of Skoal! Anyway...Empire Interactive hopes to tap into the 18-wheel zeitgeist with the hysterically titled *Big Mutha Truckers* [get it?].

Unlike the competition [see below], *BMT* features a more open-ended style of gameplay that encourages driving all over stuff. The goal is to haul as much crap as possible in a 60-day period, earning flat cash and upgrading your rig for improved performance along the way. Jobs, missions, and the like are earned through communication with all

sorts of unruly types. Once you've picked up a job, *BMT's* streaming technology allows you to go anywhere you damn well please through five major cities. If you're a naughty driver, you'll encounter the fuzz—this is a bad thing. With their "advanced pursuit A.I." the cops in *BMT* will coordinate and do their organized best to stop you. You'll also have to keep your eyes open for truckjacks, rival truckers, and your own redneck kin.

Developed by Eutechnix [makers of EA's much-decried 007 *Racing!*], *Big Mutha Truckers* is admittedly looking a lot better than its past efforts. **4+**

**GMA SAYS** → Empire's big time trucker might capture the zeitgeist of Middle America, but from where we're looking, the game looks a lot flat.

➔ HOW HOT...  

RELEASE | MARCH

## THE KING OF ROUTE 66

Platform: PS2 • Developer: SEGA • Publisher: AM2

SLIM JIMS, SHINY ARMS, AND SKOAL TINS

➔ When *18 Wheeler: American Pro Truckers* first debuted, it was considered an interesting twist on the racing genre, with trucks that felt like big rigs and an easy pick-up-and-play mentality. The problem was that the game's cross-country race against rival truckers [and occasional tornado] lasted less than 15 minutes. Longevity noted, developer AM2 went back to the drawing board and came up with the similarly inspired, but totally overhauled, *The King of Route 66*.

Like *18 Wheeler*, *KOR66* lets you pick from a balanced selection of stereotypical characters: the honky-tonk white cowboy, the blonde, vampish babe, the tomahawkin' American-Indian trucker, the afroficious jive trucker; and

the, uh, Asian truck driver. While *KOR66* features some short courses [some take less than 30 seconds], other challenges force you out on the highway for longer stretches. Connecting each odd job are cut-scenes featuring peculiar folk who enlist your truckin' aid against Tornado, an ornery pack of evil truckers. Thankfully, confrontations don't come to blows, but instead bring the battle to the street where you pit your upgradeable and customizable truck against Tornado's rigs in intense cross-country races. **4+**

**GMA SAYS** → *18 Wheeler* was fun, but hell, short. King of Route 66 will remedy that, and satisfy our truckin' needs. *Slight Pecking Ahead!*

➔ HOW HOT...   

READ MY SHORTS!

## MURAKUMO: MECH HUNTER

■ Move continues to be the place for snazzy mech games, outta Japan. Joining the likes of *Steel Battalion* and *Phantom Crash* is *Murakumo: Mech Hunter*, a fast-flying mech-chase game. More shooter than sim, *Murakumo* puts players at the helm of a massive mech in a series of high-speed chases across an array of landscapes. This one looks unique and should be a blast to boot. **(MB)**



## INCOMING GAMES

mlb slugfest → high heat major league baseball → battlefield 1942: road to rome

» NEXT

RELEASE | FEBRUARY



## MLB SLUGFEST

SYSTEM: PS2 | CREDITS: MIDWAY | DEVELOPER: MIDWAY

### FLAMING BALLS AND ALL

➔ For some, baseball's intricate strategy, languid pace, and long stretches of relative inactivity mark the sport as boring; these are the same ADD-addled people who invented *Battle Bots* and *Celebrity Moes*. But there is a game that should make the sport a little more exciting from the creator of *NFL Blitz* and *NHL Hitz*.

*MLB Slugfest 20-04* builds upon Midway's famous extreme-sports-style gameplay. This year's edition features improvements beyond the obvious roster and graphical updates. *Slugfest 20-04* has a new Home Run Derby mode, so you can send some stitched

cowhides screaming over the fences, the ability for pitchers to get "on fire," and a new customizable instant-replay system that lets you re-create that awesome catch from any angle. Other additions include new fantasy characters, stadiums, and a Create-A-Team mode that lets you draft your own All-Star team. Throw in the full *MLB* license, and you've got a rock 'em-sock 'em baseball title for twitchy-fingered stick enthusiasts. **B+**

**GMA SAYS** ➔ There are a lot of baseball scores out there this year, but only one like this

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥

RELEASE | MARCH

## HIGH HEAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2004

SYSTEM: PS2/XBOX/PC/GBA | CREDITS: 3DO | DEVELOPER: 3DO

### BATS. BALLS. IT'S ALL GOOD

➔ When it comes to hardcore baseball simulation—exhaustive stats, realistic physics, and an overall sense of the magic that makes baseball the national pastime—nothing comes close to 3DO's *High Heat* franchise. On the PC at least. This year will see some equalization between the many platform iterations of the game, with the console versions getting the advanced Career and Franchise modes and the PC version getting a graphical upgrade that should bring it up to par with its videogame cousins.

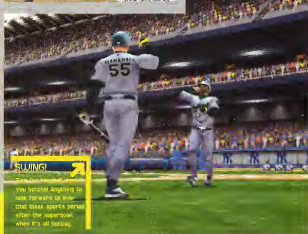
*High Heat* should play a lot better than in previous incarnations, thanks to an easy-to-use Tuning menu and an improved A.I. Of course, *High Heat*'s biggest strength is its superior pitcher-

batter interface, which has been improved and now includes 27 unique pitch types.

Die-hard baseball fans will have a lot to be happy about with this year's season. In addition to the enhanced graphics engine (which boasts more-realistic models and animations), a complete Minor League system with real players has been added, as well as a rookie draft. Better player trading—including unbalanced trades and cash for players—and a fleshed-out financial system will give players a more complete MLB experience. **B+**

**GMA SAYS** ➔ In a crowded field of competitors, *High Heat* should continue to rise above as the simulation of choice for serious fans.

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥



**SLUGFEST**  
View Hitzball! Anything to see Hitzball? To see that, you need a special order: the Hitzball, when it's all Hitzball.

## READ MY SHORTS!

### BATTLEFIELD 1942: ROAD TO ROME

■ EA's addictive and ridiculously fun World War II multiplayer slugfest is getting its first expansion pack, and it looks like a doozy. Concentrating on the often ignored Italian and Free French armies, new weapons and vehicles and six new maps. Take that, *J. Ducky*! (PC)



➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥

RELEASE | MARCH

## NBA STREET VOL. 2

SYSTEM: PS2/XBOX PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS BIG DEVELOPER: EA CANADA

AS STREET AS YOU CAN GET

➔ From the very first upright bass plunks of Black Sheep's "The Choice Is Yours" greeting you with the first loading screens, you'll know one important thing: *NBA Street Vol. 2* is dedicated to the street. From the sick hip-hop beats to the announcer's hilarious trash talk to the names of the trick moves (Special Delivery!), everything about *NBA Street Vol. 2* exudes urban culture. Oh yeah, there's a dope-ass 3-on-3 basketball game in there, too.

Building on the fantastic *NBA Street*-style of realistic-meets-exploding-rims basketball, Vol. 2 should drop a serious bomb on the sports-gaming market. Sticking to the basic streetball rules, you get a point per basket (yes, even if you're beyond the

three-point line). But special moves and overall style up the ante and unlock powered-up modes. Bust a combination of fakeouts, crossovers, and behind-the-back passes, and you'll gain extra points on top of your basket. Heck, you can even mess with your opponent's head by bouncing passes off it. Literally.

This game was meant to be played by a couple of guys who can talk as much trash as the commentator (who is much better than last year). This is a great sit-in-on-the-couch-drinking-a-40 (if you're 21) game. If you like b-ball, hip-hop, and straight frontin', then this game's for you. Invite the homies. **B+**

GMA SAYS → Here we go, here we go

→ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥🔥



AIM ROCKIN'

Can you get straight? You gotta be waiting at some rocks if you want to keep foods from dunking over your head.



RELEASE | MARCH

IL-2 STURMOVIK:  
FORGOTTEN BATTLES

SYSTEM: PC PUBLISHER: LBI SOFT DEVELOPER: MADDOX

NOT SO QUIET ON THE EASTERN FRONT

➔ Few critics or serious PC flight simmers would disagree that *IL-2 Sturmovik* was the best flight sim of 2001 and one of the best WWII-set sims ever. When an expansion was announced, most fans of the game were pleased but not exactly desperate for new content. This expansion pack, however, has quickly matured into a full-fledged sequel.

*Forgotten Battles* continues to tell the story of the less glorified air battles of WWII, but it moves from the skies over the Russian motherland to the battles over Hungary and Finland. In addition to the five massive new maps,

there are 30 new flyable planes and 23 new nonflyables, all of which will be accessible in the slick new dynamic campaign generator.

On top of all this, Maddox has upgraded the already amazing graphics engine and improved the A.I. to make the computer-controlled pilots react more realistically. A host of other improvements makes *Forgotten Battles* a boon for fans of the original and all flight simmers. **B+**

GMA SAYS → For the dedicated flight sim enthusiasts. Although it may turn you into one...

→ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥🔥



MAYDAY

If war is hell, then hell's war! cool looking. "Forgotten Battles" updated graphics brings a realistic look to a realistic simulation.

READ MY SHORTS!

## IKARUGA

■ Previously relegated to import status, this Dreamcast title is coming to GameCube, and we couldn't be more thrilled. Why? It's from "Treasure" and old-school gamers know to expect nothing less than a first-class, top-down, chime you up-and-soit your night-out shooter. This beauty should put arcade acas' abilities to the test and a thick ol' patch of hair on newbies' chests. **BDC**





RELEASE | MARCH

# AUTO MODELLISTA

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM  
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM ENTERTAINMENT

NO. NOT LINDA  
EVANGELISTA'S WHEELS

➔ Taking a surprise detour from the next *Resident Samurai* Crisis, Capcom's Japanese studio has created the stunning-looking *Auto Modellista*. More effortlessly stylish than a penguin at a black-tie party, this cel-shaded racer has already been released in Europe, where it scored only OK reviews, particularly with the U.K. press. Despite its striking good looks and deep tune-up options, the game suffered in the verve department, with vanilla A.I. and some serious slowdown and clipping issues that sent the whole enterprise veering dangerously ditchward.

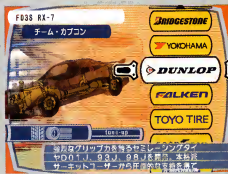
Tanking the steering wheel back in a nick of time, however, is the promise of eight-player online racing, which was never realized in the European release and fraught with problems in Japan.

For the U.S. release, Capcom is teaming up with Sega [which will provide the network know-how and servers] to ensure a smooth online experience. The company promises that many other technical issues have been addressed and resolved, though the handling, which has been described as neither drift-prone enough for *Ridge Racer* fans nor realistic enough for the *Gran Turismo* crowd, may remain unchanged.

We've yet to get our hands on the online version, but expect the tune-up and mod aspects to feature prominently, with more modifications than Steven Hawking. ☹

GMA SAYS → It's amazing what an online version can do for a game. Here's hoping.

➔ HOW HOT...



# LOST KINGDOMS 2

DEVELOPER: GIGAWATT  
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION  
PUBLISHER: FROM SOFTWARE

PICK A CARD. ANY CARD

➔ One of the nicer GameCube surprises of 2002, the original *Lost Kingdoms* was a pleasant combination of the youthful card-battle phenomenon and real-time RPG pyrotechnics.

Apparently, Activision thinks *Lost Kingdoms* is worth returning to. Taking place 200 years after the events of the first *Lost Kingdoms*, *LK2* introduces a new heroine, Tara, to save the kingdom of Argvyl from what seems to be certain destruction. Tara's decked out with 100 new monster cards, making 200 in total. With 200 enemies in the game, you'll need every resource available, which is why gamers will appreciate Tara's ability to transform into creatures herself,

unlocking new attacks and abilities. Other added features include hidden quests, puzzles, and special items to find and trade with other characters. Purportedly offering up more than 30 hours of gameplay in the single-player quest alone, 25 worlds await, taking Tara over mountains, through forests, and into fortresses. Oh, the life of a busy girl! And when the craving for human companionship rears its ugly head, a Head-to-head mode provides just the ticket. ☹

GMA SAYS → Cardbattle fun without the tedium of actual cardbattling. We like that. It's like teamwork without the work. Yup.

➔ HOW HOT...



READ MY SHORTS!

## ADVANCE WARS 2

■ GBA owners did a collective freak-out when *Advance Wars* was made its debut last year: Wars was jam-packed with easily accessible, well-balanced, deeply strategic gameplay that we're used to seeing on full-sized consoles. Nitro visuals, multiplayer modes, and tons of replay value made it one of the year's best handheld games; we expect nothing less from the sequel later this year. GMA



➔ HOW HOT... ☹☹☹

RELEASE | MARCH

## DEF JAM VENETTA

Developer: PS2DC Developer: EA Developer: AK

HIP-HOP AND YA DON'T STOP, UNLESS OF COURSE, YOU DO

➔ Whoever came up with this ideyaa of Def Jam rappers in a wrestling game, yeeeah, needs to have his head checked, because fools are gettin' wrecked. With spots by Method Man, Redman, Scarface, and Ludacris, chances are you're gonna want some of this. Oh, did we forget DMX? Well, let's take a look at what's next: 45 characters and 1,500 moves, animated crowds, butt-shaking grooves.

But you better keep your guard up, or you're going to get clowned, in 10 venues in the underground. If you're getting beat, tag out and get replaced by your tag-team buddy, or get faced. Word. ☹

**GMA SAYS** → Ah is on a roll these days, with Def Jam and Bandai's Ultimate Muscle on the pro. Wrestling never had it so good!

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥



RELEASE | MARCH

RELEASE | MARCH

## FREELANCER

Developer: PC Developer: MICROSOFT Developer: DIGITAL ANIM

BEYOND THE EARTH

➔ If you've followed the game industry for a while, you might remember people talking about Freelancer (the epic space adventure/action title from Wing Commander creator Chris Roberts) as the "next big thing" way back in 1999. Four years, the parting of Roberts, and countless rumors of demise later, Freelancer is finally about to see its way to your PC.

Set in the same story line as Digital Anvil's Dreamcast space sim Starlancer, Freelancer takes place 800 years later in a far-off colonized solar system. You play as



Trent, a freelance space pilot who finds himself plunged into a story thick with mystery and intrigue. And space pirates—gotta have space pirates. Freelancer looks great (the opening CGI is near Hollywood-caliber) and plays even better. ☹

**GMA SAYS** → It's been a long time coming, but the wait might be worth it.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

## AERO ELITE

Developer: PS2 Developer: SEGA Developer: DAIKUN KRI

FOR THE LITTLE RED BRON IN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US

➔ We regularly hit Mach 1, sometimes Mach 2, when we're here on deadline, but not with as much regularity as when we play Sega's Aero Elite: Combat Academy. We've all seen Ace Combat-esque dogfighting games before (usually when we play, uh, Ace Combat), but Sega's game warrants inspection nevertheless.

The neat thing about Aero Elite is the vast selection of airborne assault-craft you can pick from. Yes, you can fly stealth fighters and whatnot, but of the 60-plus vehicles from which to choose, the most interesting planes and copters are the ones culled from the past. With dozens of available day and night missions, realistic graphics, and two-player splitscreen mode, it looks like Sega's got the right stuff for today's armchair acrobats. ☹

**GMA SAYS** → In reality, flying this high this fast makes us crap ourselves. But video games make our dreams come true. Splendid!

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

READ MY SHORTS!

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

## REPUBLIC: THE REVOLUTION

■ Expensive in scope, Republic is an amazingly complex and open-ended strategy game that puts you into the shoes of the leader of a former Soviet satellite. Everything you do and every decision you make will have a series of cascading consequences, either good or bad. For the little Lenin in all of us. (PC)





RELEASE | MARCH

## MOTO GP3

DEVELOPER: PS2 | COLUMBOVER: NAMCO | COMMENTATOR: NAMCO

TWO WHEELS GOOD, TWO BRAKES EVEN BETTER

➔ The first two *MotoGP* games were pretty games with realistic trackside graphics and a blistering sense of speed. But despite the license, neither game had the full GP 16-course circuit. Even worse, they featured a painfully steep learning curve, as slicing through a chicane was made maddening by the lack of a two-brake setup. Anyone who rides a real motorcycle knows that front and rear brakes are part of the deal. THQ's superior Xbox game of a similar name [*MotoGP*] got it right, and it's still the best-handling motorcycle racing game to date.

But Namco took heed, finally implementing a front and rear brake

system to go with the striking visuals. The number of courses has increased to 15, although, mystifyingly, the game is still one track short of the full grid. Does *MotoGP3* handle better than previous iterations? We should say so. You still can't hurtle into the curves doing 100 mph, but you can better scrub off the speed by applying both brakes and, if you have the advanced controls on, shift your weight from front to back. Does *MotoGP3* have what it takes to dethrone THQ's effort? **B+**

**GMR SAYS** → It took Namco only three whole GP games to figure out that motorcycles have two brakes, but better late than never.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥



## KNEEL IT!

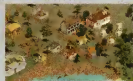
⤴️ Hit the back of track racing in the dirt, where knees scrape low. But don't bend too far, or you'll wipe out something good.



READ MY SHORTS!

## TROPICO 2: PIRATE COVE

■ Maybe we made Pirates of the Caribbean too many times when we were kids, but the idea of ruling an island full of crazy swabs with peg legs and eye patches (and the occasional parrot), as well as their captives and booty sounds strangely cool. Hah, we said booty. **C**



## WHAT IS IT?

⤴️ It's an FPS. No, wait, it's an RTS. Wait, no, it's an FPS. Whatever the heck, it's an FPS. Whatever the heck, it's an FPS. Whatever the heck, it's an FPS.

285

RELEASE | TBA

## SAVAGE

DEVELOPER: PC | COLUMBOVER: I GAMES | COMMENTATOR: S2 GAMES

NOT A 70S AFTERSHAVE

➔ You've got a choice: Do you blast the hell out of people first-person-shooter-style, or do you run the world using real-time strategy tactics? *Savage* gives you both options in a game where the battle lines are drawn between technology-reliant humans and beasts that evolve through magic and nature (a similar setup to the *GMR* team, then—Ed).

Publisher iGames bills this multiplayer online game as a real-time strategy-shooter. What the hell does that mean, you ask? Well, besides the usual side-picking for the 64-player matches featuring combatants gunning for each other,

gaining gold and experience by eliminating opponents, there's a larger decision at hand. Each side has a commander, with only two people filling those all-important slots. The commanders mold each tribe's development by researching technologies (thereby establishing their troops' weapons), building defenses, harvesting resources, and directing units. Count on hearing more about this intriguing title as its late-April release draws closer. **B+**

**GMR SAYS** → A very ambitious and innovative blend of gaming styles... if they can manage to actually pull it off.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

# SERVE CHILLED

TEAM NINJA BOSS AND VIRTUAL LADIES  
MAN TOMONORO ITAGAKI RELAXES  
WITH GMR...



➔ With *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* currently flying off store shelves into the hearts, homes and loins of virile young gamers worldwide, we thought it would be a good time to sit down with Tomonobu Itagaki and ask him the questions 4 out of 5 gamers want to know. We asked the controversial leader of Tecmo's Team Ninja a few questions about *DOAX*, the upcoming *Ninja Gaiden*, the far-flung *Dead or Alive: Code Cronus*, and the splitfastic Bob Marley. Tomonobu Itagaki, this is your moment.

**GMR:** Now that the game is finished, what are your impressions of it?

Is there anything you would still have liked to include, but couldn't because of timing?

**TI:** There is nothing we couldn't include because of timing, but there was programming we couldn't implement due to the limits of machine specs.

We included every idea we had. We had to do so, because we kept so many people waiting for a long time.

**GMR:** What was it like, working on a volleyball game after having done so many fighting games?

**TI:** The experience we have in developing fighting games enabled us to give gamers a pleasant feeling in *DOAX*. I have a strong confidence that we made a product that could never be produced by a developer who has made only sport games.

**GMR:** Are you planning on taking a vacation, like the *Dead or Alive* girls do in *DOAX*, or are you getting to work immediately on *Ninja Gaiden*?

**TI:** I had cancelled my vacations since last autumn already, and I'm getting to work immediately on *Ninja Gaiden*, since the team is waiting for me. I'm also looking forward to making an announcement of *DOA Code: Cronus* to the public.

**GMR:** Should we expect to see ninja-related cameo appearances by any of the *DOA* ninjas (besides Ryu Hayabusa) in *Ninja Gaiden*?

**TI:** You sure can!

**GMR:** What is Zack going to do now that his island has blown up and he's been eaten by a shark?

**TI:** I guess he'll start thinking of his new ambition very quickly.

**GMR:** Why did you choose Bob Marley's song "Is This Love" as the ending theme to *DOAX*? How cooperative was the Marley estate in using the song?

**TI:** They were extremely cooperative. This is the first time for a Bob Marley song to be licensed for a videogame. At the beginning, they were concerned that *DOAX* was a game with violence.

But, after they saw the video we sent, they understood *DOAX* is a game of peace and gave us their OK right away for the licensing. I appreciate their understanding very much.

**GMR:** Can you tell us anything about *Dead or Alive: Code Cronus*?

**TI:** We are making *Dead Or Alive: Code Cronus* to show the world how much Team Ninja loves the Xbox. It's too early to tell you more. Please wait.

**GMR:** Since it isn't explored in *DOAX*, can you tell us what Lisa's (the new chick) fighting style is?

**TI:** I cannot tell you about her fighting style yet, although it's been fixed already.

All the martial arts for *Dead or Alive 4* (which, by the way, is not *DOA: Code Cronus*) have been fixed and the related design works are underway.

**GMR:** Now that *DOAX* is finished, will the entire dev team help to finish *Ninja Gaiden*, or will they go to work on the next *DOA* fighting game?

**TI:** The Kunoichi Team (*DOAX* project) is going to join the *Dead Or Alive: Code Cronus* project, while the Kunai Team (*Ninja Gaiden* project) is a detachment working separately from the *DOA* series projects.

**GMR:** Ah, so Team Ninja is split into two primary development teams. Lastly, what does the future hold for Team Ninja?

**TI:** I've never thought of the future that way. I simply hope enjoyable years will last for Team Ninja like 2002, when we enjoyed developing *DOAX*.

**GMR:** Thanks for your time, Itagaki-san, and good luck on your upcoming projects. ☺

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REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

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## HOW WE RATE

YOUR GUIDE TO THE GMA SCORING SYSTEM

1 PLUMTABLE! 2 FLUSHABLE! 3 LUGHABLE! 4 FALLIBLE 5 PLAYABLE! 6 STERILABLE! 7 COLLECTIBLE! 8 ENVIABLE! 9 UNMISSABLE! 10 INDESTRUCTIBLE!

WARNING! WHERE MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF A GAME ARE REVIEWED, GMA WILL ONLY MENTION DIFFERENCES IF THEY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE GAMEPLAY!

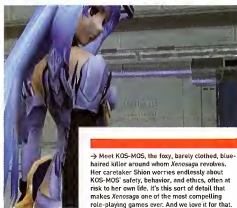




PS2



GMR  
ESSENTIAL  
SELECTION



→ Meet KOS-MOS, the foxy, barely clothed, blue-haired killer around whom *Xenosaga* revolves. Her caretaker Shion worries endlessly about KOS-MOS' safety, behavior, and ethics, often at risk to her own life. It's this sort of detail that makes *Xenosaga* one of the most compelling role-playing games ever. And we love it for that.

# XENOSAGA

THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING...

PS2 | TEEN

➔ To draw a comparison for a moment, *Xenosaga* is to videogames as the original *Star Wars* is to movies. That may sound quite grand, but it's true. No, *Xenosaga* is not about droids, rebel alliances, Death Stars, hottie princesses, or furry little Ewoks. *Xenosaga* is, however, a far-reaching epic set in the stars. An epic that, like *Star Wars*, takes many disparate, wind-swept elements and slowly, inevitably brings them together. The people, places, and things in *Xenosaga* are never quite what they seem.

But before we even touch on the gameplay aspect of *Xenosaga* (whose full title is *Xenosaga: Der Willkür Macht*, which translates to "The Will to Power,"

also the title to a book written by the German philosopher Nietzsche) we should warn you that you will watch the game as much as play it. In a genre filled with overindulgent CG cinematics and bloated story lines, *Xenosaga* takes the cake. Other RPGs (*Parasite Eve* comes to mind) have labeled themselves "cinematic RPGs," but none has ever fit that description better than this one. For every 10-15 minutes of gameplay, a movie of equal length seems to take place, contributing to issues with the game's pacing; but knowing this, one can see a certain rhyme to *Xenosaga*'s reason. In *Star Wars*, Luke Skywalker had to do a lot of droid shopping and bar-hopping before he got to shoot anything or wield a

lightsaber. It's called "laying the groundwork," and although you may want to skip the scenes, we recommend sitting back, relaxing, and soaking it all in. When was the last time you got to watch/play a 50-hour science-fiction saga?

In the distant future of the game, mankind no longer lives on terra firma, and instead glides around the galaxy in massive star-cruisers that offer all the modern conveniences. The problem for the starboard humans is a race of ghostlike aliens called the Gnosis, who are nearly indestructible with conventional weapons. To combat the enemy and minimize human casualties, a disposable race of androids (called Reallians) has been developed by the Vector nation. ➔

## 2ND OPINION

It's as long as it gets out, but *Xenosaga* looks and plays great. And hey, trying giant robots? I appreciate the railroading loop on the battle system (namely the lack of experience points and random encounters). If only I had the time to play completely through it.

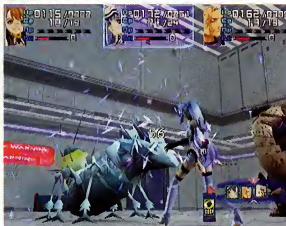
—Andrew Plaster

PUBLISHER: NANCY  
DEVELOPER: MONOLITH SOFT  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: AVAILABLE NOW  
PLAYERS: 1  
CROSS: JAPAN

PS2



→ Oh, and have we mentioned the giant mechs? They're simpler and less flashy than the mechs in *Xenogears*, but this stands to reason because *Xenosaga* takes place ages before *Gears*. Even if they're homely, there's no better way to kick Gnosis butt than to hop in an A.G.W.S. (Anti-Gnosis Weapon System) and rock. Each character's A.G.W.S. can be outfitted with better armor and weapons, too, so the perfect bot is only an upgrade away.



That's where the lead character, Shion, comes in. As a chief engineer for Vector, Shion is in charge of Vector's top-priority project: KOS-MOS.

KOS-MOS is a sort of super-soldier/Realian designed to be the ultimate anti-Gnosis weapon. But Realians have been known to form independent thought, often with fatal results [see "She's Just a Cosmic Girl" sidebar]. Various safeguards, like detonation devices, have been implanted into the Realians to prevent other behavioral variances. When KOS-MOS is in the final, crucial crucial stages of her fine-tuning, the humans are attacked by a huge squadron of Gnosis. With no hope in sight, KOS-MOS, against her directives, awakens from her "slumber," and turns the tide of battle.

By this point, the average gamer will have spent several hours playing the game, and may be bored with the slow-burn pace of the game. But anyone who

makes it far enough into the game to witness KOS-MOS unleash a hurricane kick on the nearest Gnosis, will almost certainly be hooked.

Of course, simply watching battles (as cool as those fights may be) isn't half as fun as actual participation. At the outset of the game, you are put through tutorial bootcamp. As the combat engine is exceptionally deep, gamers should take this opportunity to pay close attention to the engine's mechanics. Learning how to use the various offensive options and defensive arrangements at your disposal (like each character's "boost" ability) is especially important if you expect to get past the game's super-tough bosses. Like its forerunner *Xenogears*, *Xenosaga* allocates a certain number of attack points to each character per round. If a character has, for example, four points available, he may choose to execute two moves that "cost" two attack points each. If you choose to have your character

guard for a round, he'll come back with an increased number of points to spend, allowing for even greater attacks. Instead of earning experience points, each character acquires skill points and ether points ("ether attacks" = magic spells). You can then use these points to upgrade existing powers and abilities in a wide variety of ways. How your characters develop is completely up to you. The mechanics of battle go significantly deeper than that (hint: read the instruction manual), and when you factor in the mechs, called A.G.W.S., and their usefulness in combat, you'll need *Xenosaga*'s 50-plus hours of game time to get to grips with everything. Thankfully, encounters are not random, as you can always see your enemy coming (use your radar well, young Jedi!) and can often avoid them.

Still, the real beauty of the game doesn't kick in until the other elements start coming into play. For example, when



"Assuming you people even have a god, that is."



→ The characters in Xenosaga are more deeply developed than any videogame personalities we've ever seen. Each one is draped in motive, circumstance, and mystique. Over the course of the game's 50-plus hours, you'll get to know, and possibly care about, each and every one of them.



you are first introduced to Ziggurat 8—a relic of a cyborg who is sent to rescue a strategically important Realian named Momo—he's just another character. Once you've taken him through the enemy stronghold, rescued Momo, and fought your way out of the fortress past a particularly nasty boss character, he's practically a dear friend. The same goes for the crew of the *Elsa*, a group of space-junk scavenging rogues who ultimately prove their worth on more than one occasion. It's the depth of the characterization and the excellent job Namco's done localizing the game that keeps you watching every event with two eyes glued to the screen. The voice acting is another surprise. Considering how many hours of conversation are on the dual-layered DVD, you'd forgive *Xenosaga* for having a few crap actors, but instead, nearly everyone does an ace job. The graphics, too, are among the best ever seen on the PS2, whether you're partial to Kunihiko

Tanaka's wide-eyed character designs or not. Sure, spaceships tend to have bland, antiseptic interiors (at least we think they do), but when it comes to the lavish combination of 3D character models, expert camera direction, and glossy special effects, *Xenosaga* is right there on the cutting edge.

In short, this is not a game you'll want to rush through (as if you could). This is as complete and comprehensive an epic as we have ever seen, and it succeeds on all levels, both plot-wise and game-wise. And this is only the beginning. If *Xenosaga* is the *Star Wars* of RPGs, we can hardly wait to see *Monolith's Empire*. **A-**

—James Mielke



MORE AMBITIOUS THAN ANY RPG TO DATE  
ON A PAR WITH GAIN GLOUD 2  
WAIT FOR IT: STAR OCEAN 3 TIL THE END OF TIME



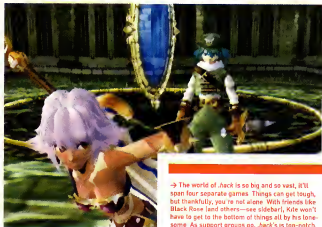
## [SHE'S JUST A COSMIC GIRL]

→ Boys say they want a nice, sweet girl to take home to Mom, but what they really want is a nasty girl. Meet Miss Nasty, aka KOS-MOS, the cold, calculating, lethal "heroine" of *Xenosaga*.

Created by Vector as the ultimate anti-Gnosis weapon, the creation of KOS-MOS hit some snags early in development. As shown in one telling cut-scene, KOS-MOS awoke from a cyber-sleep during a raid on the Vector Corporation's R&D headquarters. For both the invading shocktroopers and Vector employees, this was a fatal event. Once KOS-MOS flipped open the lid on her cryo-coffin, she did her best Linda Blair impersonation (head spinning around) and tore many unfortunate employees and soldiers to McNugget-sized bits. Because of this little tantrum, Vector Corp. implemented extra safeguards in future upgrades to KOS-MOS. **B+**



→ "Ugh. These virtual-reality journeys give me such a headache," says our girl KOS-MOS.



→ The world of *Jack* is so big and so vast, it'll span four separate games. Things can get tough, but thankfully, you're not alone. With friends like Black Rose (and others—see sidebar), Kite won't have to get to the bottom of things all by his lonesome. As support groups go, *Jack*'s in top-notch.

# JACK // INFECTION

THE GAME WITHIN A GAME

PS2 | TEEN

→ A movie about a guy watching movies would be pretty boring. But a game about a guy playing games? You might have something there—or would, if the makers of *Jack* hadn't beat you to the punch with their well-done action-RPG.

The premise is like that of *The Matrix*, but replace the leather-clad love interest with a pink-haired anime chick (we didn't say the game was perfect). You play a kid with a keen interest in a vast online world where glitches are causing strange things to happen, and you have to control his character to help set things straight.

With obvious "inspiration" coming from *Phantasy Star Online*, the upside is that, as in real online games, you'll get the

help of your teammates as you go through dungeons, and you can issue commands and use formations for an uncommon amount of strategy in an action-RPG. Just be sure not to give away the cool items you find.

In a high-concept, multimedia move, Bandai has included a separate half-hour anime DVD that shows the world outside of the game, for an even deeper experience. Such a big undertaking means the game part of *Jack* has been in development for a while, and looks a little humble next to other higher-profile RPGs. Later volumes of this four-chapter series might up the visual quality, but for now, you'll have to put up with some repetitive environments. The voice

acting is decent, if uneven.

It's always nice to see something new in a genre, and *Jack* volume 1 is a great start to an interesting series. If you can forgive it for some plain visuals and don't mind wading through menus—it may be fast-paced, but it's still an RPG—it's worth your time. **C+—Nich Maragos**

THE BANDAI  
JULY CRYSTAL CONNECT  
PS2 FEBRUARY 2003

PRICE \$49.99  
PLAYERS 1  
GENRE ACTION

**GMR** CHECK IT OUT  
7/10

BETTER THAN LEGION 2  
NOT AS GOOD AS PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 2  
WAIT FOR IT... TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE

## HACK'S VIRTUAL FAB FOURSOME

Meet the peeples. Not the Bytles.



HIS NAME IS KITE

→ What would a Japanese RPG be without a spiky-haired hero? Kite is *Jack*'s lead protagonist, and one of the strongest characters in the game.



HER NAME IS BLACK ROSE

→ The scantily clad, sharp-tongued Black Rose is always by Kite's side. This is a good thing, because she's particularly good with a sword. She's also one of the first characters you meet.



HIS NAMES IS ORCA

→ Orca is one of Kite's close online friends. When Orca gets pounded into a coma, it sets off a series of events that won't be solved until *Jack* Volume 4.



HER NAME IS MIRA

→ This is where things get a little weird. We love bunny-women as much as the next guy, but purple bunny-women? Let's not get carried away now!

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THE MONTHLY

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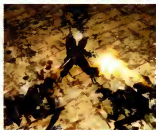
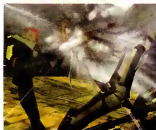
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→ If you're a DMC fan and something about these pictures looks a little... different...to you, you're not alone. Development of *Devil May Cry 2* was led by a different director than the original, and it's noticeable in the art, design, and overall quality of the game. While the original had spiffy art and level design, the sequel is merely competent in both regards. That's not to say that this is a bad game, but we definitely prefer the original flavor.



# DEVIL MAY CRY 2

A REAL DEVIL OF A TIME. OR NOT.

PS2 | MATURE

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM  
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: JAN. 28, 2003  
PLAYERS: 1  
ORIGIN: JAPAN

➔ The concept is simple. Take one overpowered character [usually some sort of badass] and throw wave after wave of underpowered yet determined thugs and goons at him until his life bar runs out or the end boss goes down. It's a staple we've played for years, meaning that any such game released nowadays has to be fresh, both aesthetically and gameplaywise, for us to notice. Much like its prequel, *Devil May Cry 2* certainly is fresh, but it seems to be balanced more toward style than substance.

As far as badasses go, Dante's one of the best. A majority of DMC's fun involves discovering the different ways to lay bad guys to waste, then combining all

your moves into one over-the-top display of carnage with a healthy dose of finesse. It's easy to do, thanks to tight controls and simple button layout: You'll quickly be pulling off double-jump shotgun blasts and then switching to your pistols, all before hitting the ground. Then you whip out the sword. John Woo would be proud.

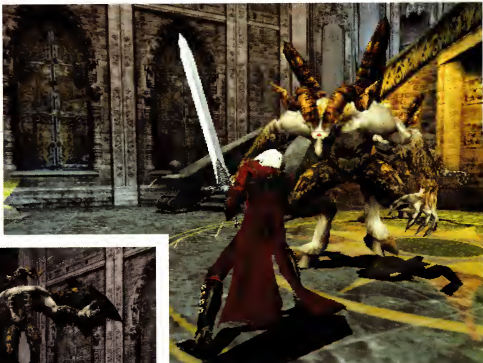
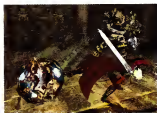
But great style does not equal great game, and once you look past the suave swordsmanship and gun gymnastics, *DMC2* has some notable drawbacks. The most glaring issue is the camera—you'll either tolerate it or hate it completely. Much like *DMC1*, you have no control over the camera angle. Many times, Dante will be looking or walking toward

the screen, leaving you with no idea of what lies ahead—you know, like enemies. It works fine for combat in confined quarters, but long hallways or open areas pose visibility problems. Another issue is the targeting system—you can't control that, either. Fortunately, the fast-and-fluid combat makes enemy-expiration order a moot point, since everyone gets his turn. If only the enemies posed any threat; as long as you keep shooting, the game is a breeze.

As a sequel, *DMC2* has a few noteworthy additions. The game actually consists of two stories: Dante's version and Lucia's version. They're basically the same levels, but Lucia's got knives and ninja skills instead of guns and swords.

## 2ND. OPINION

I really loved the first *Devil May Cry*. I like it was Castlevania reborn at last in 3D. The sequel, although twice as much game is half the experience. This is due to the Shinobi-esque camera which when targeting the game's many airborne enemies becomes a headache. The unlockable Devil clothes hardly make up for it. **D** —James Mackay



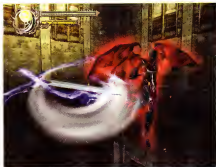
**"AS LONG AS YOU KEEP SHOOTING, THE GAME IS A BREEZE."**

You can also spend red orbs to buy weapon upgrades.

As I said before, it's a simple concept: DMC2 is straight-up action with a fresh sense of style and fluid control. The addition of a second playable character and weapon upgrades makes it a good sequel to a good game, but the frustrating, non-compliant camera and general lack of challenge keep *Devil May Cry 2* from being great. **A—Andrew Pfister**

### [DON'T MAKE ME MAD]

→ Combat is a somewhat repetitive, sometimes lengthy process. Many of the bosses have large life gauges you need to whittle away at. Fortunately, every time you attack, your Devil gauge (that small one below your life bar) grows a little. When the time is right—and you'll know when that is—tap the L1 button to enter a frenzied demon rage. While in Devil mode, you'll take no damage. Depending on what's equipped in your amulet, you'll also have freaky new powers like flight, speed, and health regeneration. Your guns also shoot their death-causing bullets at a much faster rate, so you need to spend only 10 minutes standing and shooting at the stationary boss instead of 20. **B—**



→ Dance May Fly. Your Devil gauge depletes rapidly, so be quick.

**GMR**

WORTH A LOOK  
**6**

BETTER THAN SHINOBI  
NOT AS GOOD AS DEVIL MAY CRY  
WAIT FOR IT. P.103



# THE GETAWAY

## COPS AND ROBBERS WITH AN ENGLISH ACCENT

PS2 | MATURE

PRODUCED BY: SCEA  
DEVELOPER: TEAM DINO  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: JANUARY 2002  
PLAYERS: 1  
USCIB: UK

**➔** Contrary to popular belief, *The Getaway* has very little in common with *Grand Theft Auto*. Yes, there are driving parts, and yes, there's plenty of opportunity to run around shooting at people, but that's where the similarity ends. *The Getaway* is so dark, gritty, and uncompromising, it makes *Vice City* seem much more like a cartoon than you would have previously considered it.

Whereas *GTA* thrives on freedom, *The Getaway* is tied very strongly to its story. The game opens with the main character, Mark Hammond, witnessing his wife's murder and the abduction of his child by former associates in the London mob. From here, it's a cat-and-mouse chase, as Mark is blackmailed into betraying for-

mer associates and generally getting in harm's way. Halfway through the game, the story changes completely, and you're switched to the perspective of "renegade cop" Frank Carter, whose own work fighting the gangs of London makes him an integral part of Hammond's story. It's all very clever stuff, and the action is supplemented by some sublime performances from the cast. The transitions from cut-scene to game are seamless, and the sense of urgency is wonderfully communicated through the great performances of the voice actors, who were also filmed for the animation in the scenes. It's worth noting that the game earns its M-rating with aplomb. While press for Acclaim's awful *BMX XXX* laughably referenced

shows like *The Sopranos* as artistic equals, this is a game that could credibly make such a claim.

The violence portrayed is dispassionate and brutal, and the language used throughout isn't something granny would appreciate. If the word "f\*\*k" makes you flinch, you'll be spasmodic after just five minutes with *The Getaway*. Like *GTA*, the language in the script doesn't hold anything back, but it's entirely credible and fits the vibe of the game perfectly.

While there's no arguing that the story is powerful stuff, the gameplay has some flaws that make it less than perfect. Although the game allows you to roam freely through a beautifully rendered London, progression through the mis-

### 2ND. OPINION

Blimey! My impressions are less favorable. The combat system veers unevenly between repetitive with the lock-on mode on and impossible without it. As for leaning up against a wall to heal. That's just one of those ideas that sounds good on paper and sticks in reality. It's a nice try, but it doesn't quite get there. **D** *Simon Cox*



sions is very linear. This in itself isn't a bad thing, but there are definitely some issues. The majority of missions see you driving to and from a location, jumping out of the car, and then proceeding on foot to collect something/kill someone/set fire to something. The driving parts are virtually flawless. There are 55 licensed cars that all feel different and control in a believable way. Sliding around corners and hurtling through narrow London streets feels great in everything from a double-decker bus to a Lexus SC430.

The combat portions can be frustrating, though. In a bid to make the game more credible artistically, the developers chose to remove stuff like health bars,

## [ENGLISH LESSON]

→ The game is filled with very English expressions that are made even more difficult to understand thanks to the thick cockney accents from the performers. In case you get stuck wondering what the hell they're talking about, here are a few quick helpers...

**Claret = Blood**  
"She's not afraid of a bit of claret."

**Tart = Hooker**  
"Nothing but a common tart."

**Topper = Hit man**  
"She's a topper?"

**On the game = Hooker**  
"She was on the game before."

**Copper = Policeman**  
"F\*\*k you, copper!"

**Bird = Girl**  
"She's a nice bird."

**The Filth = Police**  
"Run, it's the filth."

**Lump = Punch**  
"I lumped him."



→ The Getaway introduces a lot of new ideas and fresh thinking, provided you're up for it. If you're the type of gamer who likes a heads-up display to keep you informed about things like, oh say, how much ammunition you have or how much health you've got left, then you're not going to be happy with The Getaway, as all on-screen displays are jettisoned in favor of realism. Oh, the humanity.



maps, direction arrows, and targeting crosshairs from the screen. You're entirely on your own here, and any information is gleaned just from looking at the action. Combat is relatively easy, thanks to a simple lock-on feature that snaps from bad guy to bad guy, but managing your health is a different matter. If you get shot up, you bleed (obviously), and the only way to get health back is to find somewhere to take a breather. This involves hiding and waiting...and waiting...and waiting while you watch the patches of blood fade from your clothing. It's a cute idea, but in practice, it's a pain in the ass, and it spoils the pace of an otherwise well-structured game.

More than just about any other game,

your feelings about The Getaway will be influenced by whether or not you dig the story and the vibe it creates. If you've considered the theory that videogames are indeed art, then this is proof that they're at least aspiring to be. When opinions are split in the same way about a videogame as they are about a controversial movie or a good book, that has to be a good sign. **B+**

**John "Not Davidson" Davison**

**GMR** TOTALLY SWEET 8<sup>10</sup>  
BETTER THAN STALLONE'S VERSION OF GET CARTER AS QUITY AS THE COYOTES WAIT FOR IT DRIVER 3



→ Apex's incredibly realistic graphics engine belies the adrenaline-fueled arcade game that lies beneath. Amazing reflections and detailed car models really show off the Xbox's hardware. There isn't a better-looking racing game on the system.



# APEX

CONCEPTUALLY SPEAKING

XBOX | EVERYONE

→ I don't know about you, but when the phrase "concept cars" leaps from a game's description, the thought "couldn't afford actual manufacturer licenses, so the game is probably some cheap-o junk" pops into my mind. But it turns out that Apex actually has real-world licenses, and the concept cars are pretty damn cool.

Apex's single-player campaign mode, called Dream mode, puts you in the shoes of the CEO of a start-up car manufacturer—a young Henry Ford, if you will. At first, you don't have much more than a dirty old warehouse and some plans for a couple roadsters. Your task is to take your roadster to the tracks, win races, and promote your cars to the buying

public. The more races and randomly occurring challenges you win, the more cars you'll sell and the more R&D money you'll accrue. As you progress, you see your dirty old warehouse grow into a sleek modern factory.

The races themselves might not be to the liking of fans of games with more hardcore physics. Apex's driving style feels more Ridge Racer than Gran Turismo. But the track variety and settings make for a good mix of racing styles. From the tight hairpin turns of the inner-city tracks to the wide-open race ovals, all your skills will be tested. What I liked best was how most of the tracks were set up in a way to guarantee fast or exciting finishes.

At first glance, Apex might not seem all that impressive to Gran Turismo and Project Gotham Racing devotees. In fact, I didn't like it very much at first, but the top-notch graphics, excellent track design, and well-designed single-player campaign place Apex in the same league with those games. **—Tom Price**

FOR ADMS	PRICE	\$69.99
DEV: NINESTONE	PLAYERS	1-2
REL: MARCH 2003	GEN: N	TEXT

**GMR** TOTALLY SWEET **8/10**

BETTER THAN: TEST DRIVE 2 (XBOX, PS2)  
NOT AS GOOD AS: NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2  
WAIT FOR IT: PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

## DREAM MACHINES MAKE US SCREAM

Shows the world's concept, new machines



### ROADSTERS

→ The go-karts of the game. In addition to the four concepts, you'll find the Toyota MR2 Spyder, Mercedes SLK 32, Lotus Elise 2000, and others.



### SPORTS CARS

→ More power, but you wouldn't turn your head if one drove past. Includes the Mitsubishi Eclipse GT and Ford Mustang SVT Cobra.



### SUPER CARS

→ Now we're getting into some serious penis envy. Look for the Corvette Z06, Renault Talisman, and Aston Martin DB7 Vantage Coupe tearing up the tracks at this level.



### DREAM CARS

→ Full-on racetrack-ready race cars. Don't even think about taking the Toyota GT1, Jaguar XJ2 Z.O., or Viper SRT-10 onto surface streets.



## CUBIX ROBOTS FOR EVERYONE: SHOWDOWN

A SQUARE RPG. HA! HA!

GAMECUBE | EVERYONE

➔ We appreciate the egalitarian sentiment, but the robots in *Cubix Robots for Everyone: Showdown* are not, in fact, for everyone. Players take the role of Connor or Abby, our two young heroes, as they, aided by their robot Cubix, attempt to save Bubble Town from malfunctioning automatons. Most of the game plays out like *Pokémon* with bad wiring: robot-on-robot battles occur frequently where strength must be pitted against weakness, special attacks are employed, and a spinning wheel must be stopped at the right spots to ensure successful hits. The idea is to "catch 'em all" and, even considering this is a child's game, it's all too easy. Basic jumping and block-pushing puzzles round out the colorful package, but these too lack difficulty. Fans of the *Cubix* cartoon show will find something to like, but everyone (especially those older than, say, 15) might want to look elsewhere for a real challenge. **1 1/2**

\_Greg Orlando



PRO: 3RD  
DEV: BUBBLE TOWNS  
REL: AVAILABLE NOW

PRICE: \$29.99  
PLAYERS: 2-4  
OS: GBC, GB

**GMR** VANILLA COME S10

BETTER THAN: DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL  
NOT AS GOOD AS: CURBYONE  
WAIT FOR IT: MARIO KART



## P.T.O. IV

EVER WISH YOU COULD PLAY WITH BIG BOATS ON YOUR TV SET? NOW YOU CAN.

PS2 | EVERYONE

➔ War is Satan's playground, kid, but the WWII naval strategy *P.T.O. IV* (Pacific Theater of Operations), will make you want to ride its teeter-totter. Grand in scope, yet surprisingly easy to get into, *P.T.O.* is also a bit of a misnomer, considering it lets you operate as any one of the Axis or Allied powers in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters.

Armchair admirals can tackle all phases of naval operation, including building a fleet, spying, assigning commanders for ships, and producing new and deadly weapons of war. It's also possible to engage in diplomatic negotiations, offer aid to allies, and blockade enemy fleets. Detail-heavy almost to a fault, *P.T.O.* allows players to delegate some responsibilities to the computer, which is a deft negotiator. Lackluster graphics ensure that *P.T.O.* screenshots will never hang in the Louvre, but when the Klaxons are blaring, few will care. This one shoots to kill. **1 1/2**

\_Greg Orlando



PRO: KODI  
DEV: KODI  
REL: AVAILABLE NOW

PRICE: \$49.99  
PLAYERS: 1-4  
OS: PC, MAC, JAPAN

**GMR** CHECK IT OUT 710

BETTER THAN: CATCHING A MORTAR WITH YOUR FACE  
NOT AS GOOD AS: FRONT MISSION 3  
WAIT FOR IT: ADVANCE WARS 2



## FINAL FANTASY ORIGINS

IN THE BEGINNING

PS1 | TEEN

➔ We've had an *Anthology* (IV and VII) and a *Collection* (IV, V, and VII), and now we get to see how it all started. *Final Fantasy Origins* is an enhanced compilation of the first two games in the storied *FF* series. Square's remake factory has been working its way backward, but fortunately, they've spared us from having to suffer through the blocky pixels and bleep-blep-bleep sound that so distinctly marked the NES era.

More remakes than ports, *FFO*'s games feature new field-screen and battle art that's comparable to early era SNES titles, along with rearranged soundtracks in full CD glory. And like the other *FF* remakes, Square has added new CG cut-scenes. *Final Fantasy II* is worth checking out for the novelty factor alone, but *Final Fantasy II* is definitely the better of the two games, especially considering it's the first time English-speaking gamers have ever seen it. For those who are just curious, it might not be worth your time, but with the Amano art gallery, an Easy mode for *FFI*, and other improvements, the old school will be pleased.

1 1/2 \_Andrew Pfister



PRO: SQUARE EA  
DEV: SQUARESOFT  
REL: FEBRUARY 2003

PRICE: \$29.99  
PLAYERS: 1  
OS: PC, JAPAN

**GMR** TOTALLY SWIFT 810

BETTER THAN: FINAL FANTASY LEGEND  
ON WARPATH WITH PHANTASY STAR COLLECTION  
WAIT FOR IT: FINAL FANTASY XI



# GUILTY GEAR XX

## ARC SYSTEM'S BRAWLER HANGS TOUGH

PS2 | TEEN

In a genre dominated by Capcom and SNK, it's a shock to see an underdog, a dark horse, a black sheep come out of the woodwork and blindsides the competition. The weapon-based *Guilty Gear* series has been throwing hooks at the titans of the genre for the last few years, but has Sammy finally delivered the goods to land the knockout punch in XX?

If you were disappointed by last year's rather basic/shallow *Guilty Gear X* experience, double-X will restore your faith in no time. While the same fast-paced, 2D fighting action remains intact, the number of over-the-top moves has increased, thanks to the addition of the burst gauge (which enables even greater, eye-opening attacks). The majority of the series' characters returns, while six new metalheads enter the fray, for a total of 20. The real improvement, though, is the addition of more life-destroying options, like the

hyper-addictive Challenge mode, which, essentially, is an enormous series of scripted, character-specific tests of skill. Plowing your way through these modes unlocks even more characters to battle with.

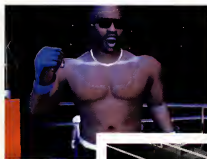
Of course, the ultrasharp, hi-res character art and fluid animation keep XX at the cutting 2D edge, putting even Capcom's most recent fighters to shame. If you enjoy 2D fighters, you have no reason not to grab this excellent entry into the genre. **A-**

James Mielke

DEV: SAMMY  
ARC SYSTEM WORKS  
REL: FEBRUARY 2003  
PRICE: \$29.99  
PLAYERS: 1-2  
GEN: JAPAN

**GMR** 8<sup>10</sup> TOTALLY SWEET

BETTER THAN: LAST BLADE 2  
NOT AS GOOD AS: SAMURAI SHOWDOWN II  
WAIT FOR IT: CAPCOM FIGHTING ALL-STAR



# PRIDE FC

## MEN IN TINY PANTS

PS2 | MATURE

Burly, plastic-looking men, be not proud. *Pride FC* serves up 3D brawling by combining boxing, kickboxing, pro wrestling, and aggravated manslaughter elements into a meal that's much like today's special at ye local greasy spoon: prepared quickly and without flavor. The action here is brutal; connected blows sound like gunshots, and blood splatters against the game's camera at fairly regular intervals. It's also possible to knock out an opponent with one well-placed hit, and fighters can execute all manners of powerful attacks. Sadly, exaggerated violence is all *Pride* has; matches often

conclude in less time than the game takes to load the match, and when two grapplers fight on the ground, the otherwise fluid action becomes jerky and stilted. Consider this *Pride* wounded at best. **D+** **Greg Orlando**

DEV: TNA  
DEV: JAPANESE  
REL: FEBRUARY 2003  
PRICE: \$49.99  
PLAYERS: 1-2  
GEN: JAPAN

**GMR** 5<sup>10</sup> VANILLA CREAM

BETTER THAN: UFC THROWDOWN  
NOT AS GOOD AS: WWF SMACKDOWN (PS2)  
WAIT FOR IT: ULTIMATE MUSCLE



## EVERBLUE 2

YOU CALL THIS A GAME?

PS2 | EVERYONE



➔ When it comes to games of a submersible nature, a few standout titles come to mind. *Treasures of the Deep* (an underappreciated PlayStation title), *Sub Rebellion* (PS2), and *In the Hunt* (Sega Saturn).

While your experience will vary depending on the title played, one underlying element ties them all together: action. While *Everblue 2* certainly takes the gamer on many underwater excursions (the original PS1 game, *Everblue*, never made it to the States), "action" is not the word one would associate with the title.

The game starts you off on a beach (ordinarily a fine way to begin a game) in *Everblue 2*'s nondescript, tropical locale. The problem is that instead of a lavish, 3D environment filled with swaying palm trees, undulating waves, and a thatched cabana in which to rest your weary feet, you're presented with a flat 2D backdrop, against which various 2D characters (with approximately two frames of animation each) talk to you. And in *Everblue 2*'s case, "talking" means "assault you with waves of text balloons—no voice acting required!" Interaction takes place via a cursor that you use to click on the various persons to initiate conversation.

Thankfully, the 3D missions—where you search high and low for buried treasure—are attractive (Iminus some draw-in), with detailed coral reefs and fish. These moments of graphical clarity help things somewhat, but the jarring switch between graphical adventure and actual gameplay is so distinct, *Everblue 2* ultimately feels like a half-baked minigame. **C- James Mielke**

DEV: CAPCOM	PRICE: \$49.99
ED: JARIN	PLAYERS: 1
DEV: AVAILABLE NOW	GENRE: ADVENTURE

**GMR** VANILLA CORN  
S<sup>NO</sup>

LESS EXCITING THAN AN AQUARIUM  
NOT AS GOOD AS *SUB REBELLION*  
WANT FOR IT... THE LORD OF THE WIND WALKER



## 5 DEVILISH GAMES

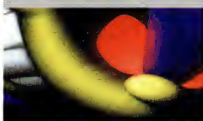
Call him what you will—Satan, Beelzebub, Mephistopheles, the Dark Lord, Pearly Shore Lucifer, Old Scratch—the devil really gets around. When he's not recording backward messages on rock albums or causing otherwise-pious folk to repeatedly stab others with icepicks, he enjoys making videogame guest appearances. Find why not? Even the master of evil likes to unwind with a little electronic entertainment. Check out some of his greatest guest-star moments.



05

### Mutant League Football Sega Genesis, Electronic Arts

Truly, football was meant to be played this way, with a team full of trolls murdering the referee, shattering the bones of opposing skeletons, and tearing up a bomb-strewn gridiron in the quest for the Mutant Bowl. You can find the devil here in many forms, wearing his trademark goat horns and a coach's cap and shouting such gems of wisdom as, "I might let you have a contract extension on your soul if you keep playing like that." Here you can call him Trickerster or Dante N. Ferno. Delicious.



04

### JERSEY DEVIL Sony PlayStation, Sony Entertainment

In his purple goody-mascot phase, the devil decided—what the heck!—to go straight outta Trenton and into this lame-ass platformer. What was he thinking? Was he trying to create his own hellish dimension on Earth? Was he hoping to make mortals feel the searing pain of hell's flames or, conversely, demonstrate once and for all that hell is colder than a Norwegian's buttocks? Anyway, jumping around, spinning like *Crash Bandicoot*, and sucking eggs aren't really Satan's bag, so it's best that this one was damned to the eighth level of sales' hell and the ninth level of obscurity.



03

### TEKKEN 2 Namco, Sony PlayStation

Well, old Satan didn't bother with the pseudonyms or disguises here. Naked and purple like some hideous muscled Barney, the devil uses Mizushima karate in his quest to beat up all the fighters in the King of Fist Tournament. The Dark Lord's motivations for wanting to join a fighting competition are not comprehensible to mere mortals, but he couldn't have chosen a better brawler to co-star in.



02

### SATAN'S HOLLOW Bally Midway, Arcade

This game did a good job of blending the disparate videogame genres of shooting and bridge building. Players controlled a lightly armored cannon and were required to shoot waves of gargoyles until, lo and behold, Satan appeared as a crimson, trident-holding, fire-breathing, flying head. The bridge-building part, like the rest of the game, proved quite silly. Satan, oddly enough, would later swoop in, collect all the copies of this game, and drop them in a hollow.



01

### DEVIL'S CRUSH Working Designs, TurboGrafx-16

This was perhaps the greatest devil-themed pinball videogame on a doomed platform ever created. Deep and difficult, the game held three individual screens, all manner of secret areas in which balls could be whacked, and a morphing woman's head that needed to be struck to change said head into a hideous snake that allowed access to bonus levels. Oh, and it had a decidedly evil, pounding metal soundtrack (as metal as bleeps and bloops could be, at least). Hell ain't a bad place to be, it proclaimed.

GMR  
ESSENTIAL  
SELECTION

# DARK CLOUD 2

## MASTERPIECE THEATER

PS2 | TEEN

PUBLISHER: SGA  
DEVELOPER: LODE-4  
PRICE: \$49.99  
AVAILABLE NOW  
PLAYERS: 1  
ORIGIN: JAPAN



While many of today's big-budget RPGs inundate the gamer with eye-poking special effects, extravagant CG cinemas, and spiky-haired extreme heroes, most of them fail to capture the spirit of high adventure. *Dark Cloud 2* doesn't have this problem. Taking inspired (unintentional perhaps) cues from sources as diverse as *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Tail Concerto*, and *Ringling Brothers* (battle under the bigtop!), *DC2* eschews pyrotechnics for a solid story and compelling gameplay.

The original *Dark Cloud*, although flawed—and not quite the “Zelda-killer” it was made out to be—still established Level-5 as a developer to watch in the RPG stakes. The first game was a

mediocre action-RPG that relied primarily on its gimmicky Georama system, but it suffered from its own ambitious designs. The first *DC* had too many characters, not enough weapons, an annoying-as-hell thirst meter (hi, *Disaster Report!*), and weapon-specific characters who were a hassle to manage. It was a bit of a mess, but a mess upon which Level-5 could build, and in this graceful sequel, improve.

So, if you had reservations about *Dark Cloud 2*, rest easy in the knowledge that not only does it improve upon the previous game in every conceivable way, it also stands up as one of the best RPGs of all time. And that's no overstatement.

From the very start of the game, when

you take the role of Maximilian (a young boy in search of his mother), you realize you're in for something special. The localization Sony has done with *DC2* is largely responsible for that. The script has been expertly converted into words that sound just right, and the voice acting from the entire cast is absolutely superb. Maximilian in particular conveys a sense of wonder and discovery as well as any young hero in classic cinema ever did.

The other element that makes *DC2*'s brand of dungeon crawling and boss battling so special is the weapon-building system. How you evolve your weapons is completely up to you, be they swords, guns or tools. The possibilities are enormously flexible. Max's customizable

### 2ND. OPINION

It's hard to not having played much of the first *Dark Cloud* (even though I'm a big fan of the town building *Long Live the Princess*), something about that game just didn't grab me. My personal subtitle for the sequel? *Dark Cloud 2: Problem Solved*! Not only does the art grab me, but it evokes the clean up-side the head. 

—Andrew Porter

## [THREE'S A CROWD]

➔ One of the more annoying parts of the first *Dark Cloud* was managing multiple characters. While this accounted for only a half dozen or so characters, it was an extra hassle nonetheless. The problem was that different party members specialized in different skills. No one character could, say, use a sword and a gun.

In *Dark Cloud 2*, you control, for the most part, Maximilian and Monica (although you can switch to the Ridebot, and Monica can transform into various monsters, etc.). Both characters can now wield two weapons. Maximilian swings a big wrench in one hand and a pistol

[given to him by a concerned friend early in the game] in the other. Monica uses a magic bracelet on one wrist while leveraging a sword with her other hand. The beauty behind this new dual-weapon arrangement is the upgrade feature. By adding items with varying attributes to your weapons, they will grow and transform into new, more powerful weapons. By the time you finish the game, your arsenal will be fearsome indeed. This is the most fun part of the game. There is nothing more satisfying in the game than trying out your newly upgraded weapons on the heads of dungeon-crawling monsters everywhere.



➔ Walking in single file is tricky business, kids. Don't try this one at home.



➔ Your Ridebot (below) is Max's big buddy in times of need. Times of need equates with fighting monsters that would otherwise flatten Max with a punch or two. The Ridebot can be customized in a myriad of ways. Don't like the way it runs? Give it some treads or equip it with rollerblades. Exchange its arms for a big mallet or goring gun. Improve its armor and fuel capacity, and Max can go toe to toe with the game's biggest, baddest bosses.



Ridebot is also part of the DC2 blueprint and the sky's the limit on how you upgrade it. Lastly, the invention-building feature, which lets you create new weapons by combining photos of different found objects is nothing short of genius.

As accomplished an RPG as we've ever played, *Dark Cloud 2* earns its keep, not by impressing you with forgettable effects, but by going straight for your heart. **A—James Mielke**

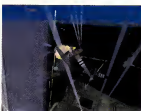
**GMR**

EXTREME FUN  
**9**<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN WILD ARMS 3  
ON A PAR WITH SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS  
WAIT FOR IT...DRAGON WARRIOR VII







# MOH: SPEARHEAD

## FUN WHILE IT LASTS

PC / TEEN

DEVELOPER: EA  
DISTRIBUTOR: EA  
PRICE: \$29.99  
AVAILABLE NOW  
RELEASED: 7-26  
RATED: ESR

➔ *Medal of Honor* was one of last year's best shooters, and *Spearhead* offers more of the same team-based, heavily scripted action that made the first game great. The new missions are more tightly focused and more exciting—this time, you link up with various units to take out tanks and bridges, shoot down a German Stuka with an anti-aircraft gun, repulse an onslaught of soldiers and armored units in the Battle of the Bulge, and take on swarms of Panzers in bomb-blasted Berlin.

The missions are difficult and feature intense action with increasingly deadly challenges. One of the best is a rail seg-

ment in which you're shooting an antitank gun mounted in the back of a truck as it careens through German positions and then crashes down a hillside. Later, in Berlin, you take over a Russian tank that lets you fire the main gun and a .50-caliber machine gun—alternating between the two with the right mouse button.

For multiplayer, *Spearhead* adds 13 new maps and 20 new weapons, including a portable MG42 that will decimate enemy troops. (I had a blast one night sitting in a window obliterating everyone who ran down the street.) *Spearhead*'s default movement is also faster, which makes the game livelier. But if you're only

interested in single player, there may not be enough here to sway you.

In all, *Spearhead* is a worthwhile add-on with several exciting missions, but if you expect more for your 30 bucks, you might want to wait until the price drops, so you won't feel gyped when you finish it in a weekend. **B+**

—Ken Brown

**GMR**

BETTER THAN PRISONER OF WAR  
NOT AS GOOD AS MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT  
WAIT FOR IT... BATTLEFIELD 1942: ROAD TO ROME

CHECK IT OUT  
**7/10**

## 2ND. OPINION

*Medal of Honor: Spearhead* was such a great game on the PC. It is a shame that the expansion pack is such a letdown—so short and so not worth playing in the first place. Yeah, new guns and toys are fun and all, but MOH was made by the great single-player experience of which *Spearhead* has none.

**B-**  
—Tom Price



## IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES

PLAYING GOD

PC | TEEN

➔ God must've been high when making the platypus, that's a given. It's furry, has a duck's bill and a beaver's tail, and lays eggs. You, however, won't need a single toke to appreciate your own creations in *Impossible Creatures*. Three years in the making, this ambitious title is part real-time strategy, part *Magic: The Gathering*. If you like either, you're in for a treat. This DNA-blender of a game puts you right in the middle of a 1930's sci-fi pulp fiction adventure. Antarctica substitutes for The Isle of Dr. Moreau as the single-player campaign walks you through RTS genetics 101. You'll get plenty of time to experiment with 50-plus animals that can be mixed and matched in nearly 40,000 different variations. What happens when you combine a spitting cobra with legs? It's easy to make new monstrosities and pick genetic traits for each. This is the genius behind *Impossible Creatures*.

Using your army of combo-creatures, veteran RTS players will quickly enter familiar terrain. Scout the land for resources to harvest and technology to develop. And where the single-player campaign introduces you to the world, the

Army Combiner and Multiplayer matches will have you nipping your hair out trying to create the perfect army. It's so easy to get lost in creature creation, you might spend more time doing that than actually playing. My only gripe: Multiplayer matches quickly devolve into resource races of who can create the most potent attackers first. You need to balance your bestiary with everything from low-level peck hunters to flying creatures and hulking brutes.

What on the surface looks like your run-of-the-mill RTS game is actually a sophisticated action-packed balancing act. And the fact that your armies can be so varied adds a unique challenge for Skirmish and Multiplayer matches—if you're up for it. **C+**

—Darren Gladstone

DEV: MICROBOLT  
PUB: BILIC  
REL: JANUARY 2002

PRICE: \$49.99  
PLAYERS: 1-6  
GENRE: U.S.A.

**GMR** TOTALLY SWEET  
8<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN: EARTH 2150  
NOT AS GOOD AS: COMMAND & CONQUER: GENERALS  
WAIT FOR IT... COMMAND AND CONQUER: GENERALS



## GALERIES: ASH

MIND GAMES

PS2 | TEEN

➔ This Dorothy isn't going to skip down the yellow brick road to Auntie Em. She's an evil computer, a twisted mass of circuitry gone bad on a one-way trip to cyber hell—courtesy of the creepy, drug-dependent, psychic kid Rion. With her defeat, *Galeries: Ash*, a sequel to the 3D survival-horror adventure *Galeries*, begins in earnest, taking its protagonist six years into the future.

Ash does a wonderful job of establishing an eerie, dystopian world where Dorothy's evil still lingers. Environments are often cavernous, metallic affairs devoid of humanity, and this sense of sterility adds greatly to the mood. Real-time battles allow Rion to employ some devastating, well-animated mental attacks, and a passable lock-on system allows him to strike at the hideous human and nonhuman foes he encounters. As in real life, drugs make things interesting (just say NO!). Rion must take them regularly to sustain his powers and keep them in check. Without them, he's one dead little creep.

A solid plot, complete with the requisite twists and surprises, serves as

a great motivation to race through *Ash*, and, aside from some uninspired voice acting, the game only truly suffers from a camera that tends to dance and jitter when the hero moves too close to obstacles. Fans of the 70-hour epic may be disappointed, too, as *Ash* burns out before it really starts to cook. It can be beaten, easily, in about 10 hours. **C-**

—Greg Orlando



DEV: SANITY  
PUB: ENTERTAINMENT  
REL: FEBRUARY 2002

PRICE: \$49.99  
PLAYERS: 1  
GENRE: JAPAN

**GMR** CHECK IT OUT  
7<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN: VAMPIRE HUNTER D  
NOT AS GOOD AS: DINO CRISIS 2  
WAIT FOR IT... TOMB R. JOKER... 100





# GBA REVIEWS

HERE AT GMA, WE DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE LITTLE GUY. AFTER ALL, SOME OF GAMING'S BIGGEST MOMENTS HAPPEN ON THE SMALLEST OF GAMES. INVESTIGATE.



## LUFIA

THE RUINS OF LORE

GBA | EVERYONE

➔ Back in the 16-bit Super Nintendo days, the Lufia franchise never managed to squeeze into the limelight. Overshadowed by Square's RPG juggernauts (like *Final Fantasy III* and *Chrono Trigger*), Lufia and its sequel, *Revenge of the Sinistrals*, remained far from most gamers' role-playing radar (and a disappointing Game Boy Color sequel was best left lost at sea). Luckily, the series has one more chance with Lufia: A quick warning, though: The difficulty can be rather intense, so role-playing novices might want to steer clear. **C+**

On the surface, it's standard stuff—you lead a pack of adventurous kids on a quest to fell an evil empire. The characters are endearing, but you won't necessarily be hooked on the plot. Thankfully, excellent gameplay and some damn-fine GBA RPG graphics help to fill that void. The battle system precisely balances speed and strategy, letting you quickly complete simple encounters while offer-

ing tremendous challenge on boss fights. A complex job system adds another layer of customization, allowing you to tweak the abilities of your party members in any way you like. Factor in extras like a detailed monster-raising subgame; a massive, multi-floor optional dungeon; and an inventive four-player cooperative mode (dig those link-cables out, kids!), and you definitely get your money's worth with Lufia. A quick warning, though: The difficulty can be rather intense, so role-playing novices might want to steer clear. **C+**

—Shane Bettenhausen

PS2 AUGUS	PRICE	\$29.99
GBA MAY15	PLAYERS	1-4
REL. FEBRUARY 2002	DEVELOPER	JAPANESE

**GMR** 8<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN: THE BREATH OF FIRE GAMES  
WORSE THAN: SQUARE'S UPWARD GBA LINEUP  
WAIT FOR IT... LUFIA IS ON GBA

## DAREDEVIL

BLIND PEOPLE ARE HEROES, TOO

GBA | EVERYONE

➔ Matt Murdock is one of the best characters in comics out there, but the moment he steps outside of comic book pages, things go wrong. First, Ben Affleck is playing him in the movie, and now, he gets shoved into a mediocre GBA beat-em-up.

Daredevil just prowls the streets in full side-scrolling glory, cracking heads left and right like any old and unoriginal brawler. OK, his radar sense gimmick of seeing hidden items is kinda cool. But that doesn't surpass the repetitive and boring levels, the stale gameplay, and the archaic password system that tracks your progress. The upside is that various movie skills and comic art are unlockable secrets. Big whoop. **C-**

—Thierry Nguyen



PS2 DECEMBER	PRICE	\$29.99
GBA FEBRUARY 2002	PLAYERS	1
	DEVELOPER	U.S.A.

**GMR** 4<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN: SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE  
NOT AS GOOD AS: X-MEN, WOLVERINE'S REV  
WAIT FOR IT... BEN AFFLECK TO DIVORCE J-LIU

## CRASH BANDICOOT 2

MORE CRASH. SAME OLD 'COOT

GBA | TEEN

➔ N-treresting. This cash cow has yet to produce puffs of smoke from its udders and thus has been put forth for yet another milking. *Crash Bandicoot 2: N-Tranced* offers nothing new, save for a delightful pun, but who can fault the developers for wanting to pay off their mortgages? The game itself is a competently produced platformer with a mad-on-for-item collection and box smashing. Crash, the bandicoot, proves he still has some legs, and, taken in small doses, this version is harmless. But the goal was, apparently, to toe the line, in lieu of making any headway in this crowded genre. The short of it is—you've played it before. N-d of story. **C-**

—Greg Orlando



PS2 DECEMBER	PRICE	\$29.99
GBA JANUARY 2002	PLAYERS	1-2
	DEVELOPER	U.S.A.

**GMR** 5<sup>10</sup>

BETTER THAN: SPYRO 2: SEASON OF FLAME  
NOT AS GOOD AS: YOSHIE'S ISLAND 3  
WAIT FOR IT... BLACKTHORNE

# SOUND ADVICE

## MONSTER 5.1 SURROUND

MONSTER SOUND ON A BUDGET? ALMOST

PS2 | XBOX

Known primarily for its high-end sound cable, Monster Game steps one foot deeper in the sound arena by unleashing its gamer-friendly 5.1 Surround Sound system, in both PS2 and Xbox flavors [PS2 version shown]. Gamers looking for an easy entry package into the world of high fidelity will find good value in Monster's setup. Those who take the \$199.95 dive (a bargain in the world of digital audio) receive five satellite speakers and a subwoofer, for a total of 130 punchy watts. Your game system is connected to one of two RCA inputs, via a set of included Monster RCA cables.

The system is sturdily constructed, with easy-to-assemble color-coded wiring and, of course, high-quality Monster cable. The included remote control is well designed, making sound adjustments a snap. The downside is that although channel separation is good, the midrange is lacking and often sounds flat. The lack of an optical digital input is also a bummer, but considering the price, this is good value for the money. **B+**

**GMR** WORTH A LOOK  
6<sup>10</sup>



## KENWOOD DVT-605

MORE OPTIONS. MORE SOUND. MORE MOOLAH

PS2 | XBOX | GC

If price isn't a concern and you're willing to spend over twice the cost of Monster's setup, the Kenwood DVT-605 is an excellent all-in-one A/V system that will take care of both your gaming and movie-watching needs. Although the PS2 and Xbox double nicely as DVD players, we prefer to save the wear and tear on our game machines and leave the footwork up to dedicated players.

The DVT-605 plays DVDs, CDs, CD-RWs, and MP3-encoded discs and comes complete with six speakers (not shown) and color-coded cables, making installation a snap. The system features three S-video inputs (as well as composite inputs), two S-video outputs, and an optical digital input for true digital sound. The Kenwood boasts SRS Circle Surround II surround processing, as well as Dolby Digital, DTS, and Dolby

Pro Logic II decoding. Circle Surround II enhances the bass performance while improving the clarity of spoken dialogue in the center channel and cranks out 6.1-channel surround sound playback from a variety of audio sources—mono, 2-channel, or matrix-encoded. Clocking in at \$500 (MSRP), the DVT-605 is a bigger commitment, wallet-wise, than the Monster, but if true digital sound and convenience wrapped in a space-saving package sounds good to you, this is the way to go. **A-** James Mielke

**GMR** TOTALLY SWEET  
8<sup>10</sup>



XB

PS2

GBA

GC

## RETRO ACTIVE

GMR RE-INVESTIGATES CLASSICS OF THE PAST. OUR KUNG-FU IS UNSTOPPABLE

## DEVIL MAY CRY

OCTOBER 2001 FOR PLAYSTATION

For years, the *Resident Evil* series dominated the survival-horror genre with an iron fist [close, *Silent Hill*, but no cigar]. *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* had only recently raised the bar on real-time graphics and horror-themed story-telling, but something was going horribly wrong. Was it pushing forward to walk, pushing right to turn right that was working our collective gaming nerves? And with other games in the genre failing to light our fires (*Dino Crisis*, *Vampire Hunter D*, *Blue Stinger*, *Illbleed*, etc.), we needed a savior.

BANG BANG BIZZANG! Leave it to Capcom to save themselves from... themselves. In October of 2001 (not so long ago, really), *Resident Evil* mastermind Shinji Mikami unleashed a new kind of action hero on the unsuspecting masses—Dante, a fella who could take a broadsword to the chest and laugh it off. Around these parts, we love a no-holds-barred kind of guy who

shoots first and asks questions later, and since no one's bothered to make a *Dirty Harry* game recently, Dante was just the tonic. Call us crazy, but there's something sweet about a dude who runs around pumping hot lead into the minions of the underworld with twin pistols for a shotgun or a rocket launcher, pick your poison! and a never-ending supply of ammo. OK, so some of the dialogue is stuporingly bad (Capcom's vocal producers must not have ears), and we really, really wanted to be able to play as Trish [you can't]. Still, with the survival-horror concept in danger of becoming irreparably wack, *Devil May Cry* came along and gave the genre the kick in the keister it so desperately needed. Now that it's under \$20, owning this classic has never been easier. **10** James Mielke



NOW...

Just as rockin' as ever and better than its sequel. Soon to be surpassed by Capcom's own upcoming games.

GMR

TOTALLY SWEET  
8/10

THEN...

A breath of fresh air compared to the stale *Resident Evil* series. The ultimate badass game.

GMR

EXTREME FUN  
9/10

## XENOGears

OCTOBER 1998 FOR PLAYSTATION

In 1998, RPGs were just coming into their own. *Final Fantasy* was dominating, but the battle was fierce, with titles from Capcom, Atlus, Konami, and Namco fighting for mind-share. Then Square nearly one-upped itself with a left hook by the name of *Xenogears*.

It didn't feature the expensive CG the *FF* games were, by now, known for, but it did feature a superb plot that pushed the expectations of role-playing gamers everywhere with its eye-opening antitheological concepts and mech-powered battles. The game was long, and took a while to really get going, but

once things settled in and your small party of characters grew, there was no turning back. Unfortunately, Square's financial focus was on *Final Fantasy*, not *Xenogears*, which caused many of the 'Gears team to bolt ship and form their own company, Monolith Soft. As Tetsuya Takahashi, vice president of Monolith Soft remembers, "Square decided to develop the *Final Fantasy* franchise and online contents only. We didn't get enough resources to develop a game. Around that time, Sugiyama-san [Xenogears' producer] asked me if I wanted to establish a company. So I decided to move on." **10** James Mielke

NOW...

Naturally, the graphics are dated, but the overall design holds up. The story is as intense as ever. Hard to find.

GMR

EXTREME FUN  
9/10

THEN...

Controversial and slow to kick in, the payoff was worth the time invested. A groundbreaking RPG.

GMR

EXTREME FUN  
9/10



## BLAST FROM THE PAST

### THIS MONTH, WE REMEMBER...THE DREAMCAST

➔ It's a shame when a company does every possible thing to meet gamers' expectations and still fails to capture the imagination (and wallets) of consumers everywhere. Case in point: the Dreamcast. Sega, after setting a torrid pace with the Genesis in the '90s, fumbled the ball with the Sega CD, 32X, Nomad, and Saturn. But with the Dreamcast, they had once again set new trends (built-in modem, high-capacity storage medium, VGA output, powerful processor, voice-recognition, headset, keyboard support, etc.), only to meet with public indifference. Nowadays, you can find one cheap, and every gamer worth his salt should have one in his collection. To this day, the DC is still the world's greatest fighting-game machine, surpassing even the venerable Neo-Geo in both quantity and quality. **B+**



**KEY TITLES:** While the N64 and PS2 provided quality titles for sure, the truly cutting-edge games of the day called the Dreamcast their home. *Seaman*, *Garou: Mark of the Wolves*, *Soul Calibur*, *Jet Grind Radio*, *Marvel vs. Capcom 2*, *Tech Romancer*, *Shermoe*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Crazy Taxi*, *Virtual On*, *Oratorio Tangram*, *Typing of the Dead*, *Dead or Alive 2*, *Virtua Tennis*, *NBA2K*, *NFL2K*, *Last Blade 2*, *Mars Matrix*, *Project Justice*, *Skies of Arcadia*, *Alien Front Online*, *Resident Evil: Code Veronica*, *Bombberman Online*, *Bangai-o*, *Record of Lodoss War*, *24-Hour Le Mans*, *Virtua Fighter 3*, *Capcom vs. SNK*, *Chu Chu Rocket*, *Space Channel 5*, *Ecco the Dolphin*, *Phantasy Star Online*. That's a mighty hefty (if incomplete) list, and considering most of these games can be had for under \$10, you'd be wise to grab them now, because they're only going to become harder to find in the future. **B+**

## GMR TREASURE HUNTER

Games you'll want tomorrow, but can find today. Don't let these classics slip away.

RANK	TITLE	FORMAT	RATING
01	SILENT BOMBER (BANDAI)	PS	9
02	FOREVER KINGDOM (AGETEC)	PS2	8
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PREOWNED TITLE	U.S. PRICE	CANADIAN
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PROJECT GOTHAM RACING	\$14.99	\$24.99
RALLSPORT CHALLENGE	\$19.99	\$39.99
SEGA GT 2002	\$24.99	\$49.99
SILENT HILL 2	\$19.99	\$49.99
SPIDERMAN	\$24.99	\$49.99
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WWF RAW IS WAR	\$12.99	\$29.99



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TIPS, CODES, MOVIES, AND MORE



## THIS MONTH IN MORE

### DEVIL MAY CRY 2

→Don't cry, we'll hold your hand

078

### XENOSAGA

→Blueprints for the ultimate attack

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→Open Pandora's Box in *Age of Mythology*

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→Devils, robots, gangsters, aliens, and Matt Damon

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→Games you should and should not buy

090

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→Did he just tell you to stop reading this magazine?

098

MORE 



# DEVIL MAY CRY 2

MORE STALE PUNS: THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS...

## THE ART OF FIGHTING

➔ If you're cool—and GMR readers are most definitely cool—you'll be stringing together attacks to improve your Style score. Upward sword strikes, double jumps, and weapon switching will help in this regard. You'll see various words of encouragement if you're doing it right. **1E**

## ORBS

➔ **Red Orb** – Currency; gained by eliminating monsters or finding them in levels. Spend it on items, gauge extensions, and raising weapon levels.



**Blue Orb** – Blue orbs, commonly found in fragments, will extend your life gauge.



**Purple Orb** – White orbs expand the capacity of your devil gauge.



**Gold Orb** – Resurrection; God forbid you get yourself killed, possessing a gold orb immediately resurrects you. **1E**



## DANTE'S WALKTHROUGH

### MISSION 1

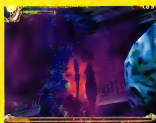
➔ Hey, it's Level 1: a basic introduction to combat and movement. Get used to your double jumps and sword swipes. Make your way through the city and over the rooftops to the open courtyard. Play nice with all your little monster friends. Then move on to the next stage.

### MISSION 2

➔ Plow through the sewers and smash the face statues with sword attacks. This will open the gates. At the end of the sewer are two statue demons. Transform to Devil mode and commence with the cap bustin'. Step into the green light to recharge your devil meter, if need be. You'll get the Aerial Heart as a reward, which lets you fly in Devil mode. Fly up to the exit and on to the third mission.

### MISSION 3

➔ Right away, you're facing off against a flying demon who keeps trying to light a fire under your ass. Stay on the move and you won't get burned. Forget about the henchmen drones and keep moving down the alley where you can take the demon out. The first boss fight is inside the train station, along with the first opportunity to get frustrated with the enemy-targeting system. Persevere. This bad guy'll get all grabby if you get too close, so unload ammo from afar and avoid his sonic boom attacks. If you can get close enough for a sword combo, go for it. Otherwise, stick to your guns.



### MISSION 4

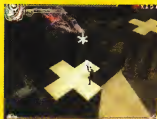
➔ Down near the harbor is a switch that opens a gate. Ignore it for now; go past it and through the nearby door. Inside are some monsters. Kill them! In the room at the top of the stairs is the Quick Heart, which enables Dante the Devil to run. Now, go back to the switch. Activate it and boogie on down toward the door. You'll eventually get to the next boss, who looks difficult at first, but isn't after you find the pattern. Pick a tentacle near a wall and concentrate your fire on it. It'll eventually fall off and give you a clear line of sight to the main head, which is the only vulnerable part. Unleash your fury while you can—when the tentacle regenerates, back off and repeat the process till he's good and dead.



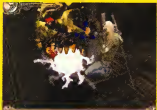
### MISSION 5

➔ We're getting close to downtown and the action is picking up considerably. Take out the pair of wolves with your handguns—the sword is too slow and they're too fast. Make your way through the roadways, and if you feel like stopping to fight, feel free to do so. Remember that first boss—the one who enjoyed jumping on your head? Well, he's back, and he still likes jumping on your head. Deal with him in the same manner as





before, then move on to the tanks. You heard me. Tanks. They're easy, though—just strafe from side to side. It'll take a while, but you're not in any real danger. Move on until you come across the attack chopper. Again, a relatively easy boss with an insanely large energy meter. You'll fight him three separate times. The first is easy, but it's difficult to see him. Stay in his shadow and just fire upwards. The second encounter is a thrilling run through a burning building (well, jumps—love them). The last battle is on the helipad. Again, stay in or near the chopper's shadow and roll away from any incoming attacks. Wear him down with the submachine gun love you can only get with Devil mode. Congratulations. You just spent 20 minutes tapping the Square button!



## MISSION 6

Forget regular battles—let's go straight to the boss. This creepy guy has two forms. The first is incredibly easy: Just stand in front of him and shoot. If he busts out his sweeping mouth beam, jump over it. His second form is a bit trickier—the attacks are faster, more damaging, and harder to dodge. He's also more mobile. When he comes at you with the cluster beam attacks, roll to the side and fire ASAP.

## MISSION 7

For some reason, you're now on an offshore oil rig. Might as well find stuff to kill while you're here. This is a relatively easy mission; no boss fight or significant battles. Descend into the complex, make the narrow jump across the lava pool, and then head toward the elevator. After a long and Muzak-less ride down, hop onto the train and clear out the car. At the end of the line you'll find yet another elevator ride and the end of the mission.

## MISSION 8

Boss fight! Boss fight! This horned fellow wields a mighty hammer. You should stay away from the mighty hammer. He'll charge at you, so be ready to roll. Go to your left (his right) so you don't roll into the hammer. That would be embarrassing. Every once in a while he'll throw out a ring of fire or whip up a vacuum, so keep your distance.



## MISSION 9

Factory about to collapse and might explode? Better hightail it out of there. You'll be coming back the same way you came in, only there's no more train. Jump down the elevator shaft and run along the right train track. Or, if you have time to kill, you could spend 12 minutes at the bottom of the shaft taking out the flaming monster guys and banking a lot of red orbs. Sure, time will run out and you'll die, but you get to keep all the orbs. Anyway, there's a door on the right side of the track, and the room it leads to contains the Vendetta broadsword and the Offence Heart. Pick 'em up and continue through the other door. You'll eventually come to the large open area you saw before, but the door at the top is locked. Activate the three switches to unlock it. Inside the hangar is an airplane, and inside the airplane is a new toy: the missile launcher. Once you pick that up, go to the bottom of the giant fan and exit the level.

## MISSION 10

Grab the red and blue orb material near the entrance. There's yet another gate to go through, but you can't open it without activating the two switches sitting across from one another in the middle of the courtyard. They're timed, so hit them quickly. The courtyard will open and you'll go down the stairs to find another boss fight. This flying moth is probably the most difficult boss so far, but only because he drops larvae that grow fairly large fairly quickly, and if you get too close they'll swallow you up. To avoid major damage, you'll want to be airborne as much as possible. Concentrate fire on the moth, because he can't make babies if he's dead. Clean up the rest of the worms and collect your winnings.



## MISSION 11

Be sure to visit the secret room before heading downstairs. When you get to the room with the falling spikes, bust open the far wall and dash on through. Climb the platforms and activate the switch at the top of the room. The boss of this mission is the wolf master you saw before, and he's



a little upset that you killed his pets earlier. He's got a wicked vertical strike, so be on your toes. Ignore the wolves, because they respawn. There's a nice big green orb, in case you get into trouble.



## MISSION 12

The first part of this stage will make you hate the camera, and may even cause you to curse at the parents, neighbors, and mailman of the guy who designed it. Avoid the outer blue force field and the inner sphere, and instead concentrate your sword attacks on the purple crystals. Drop down into the hole and meet with Lucia. After a little chat about the local sports team, a new boss appears. Surprise—he's easy to kill. His fancy balls-on-chains look nice but can't reach very far, so shoot from out of range. Whenever the blue lasers show up, jump over them. We didn't really need to tell you that, though.



## MISSION 13

Just like a girl, Lucia went and got herself captured, now you have to face off against Arias and save her. All you need to do here is launch missiles at the poor sap for a while and avoid the low-level

monsters he conjures up. No big whoop. You know, as far as evil archenemies intent on raising the dead and causing trouble in general, Arias is pretty weak sauce. That white suit doesn't inspire much fear.



## MISSION 14

You'll do a lot of backtracking to find the four switches you need to activate, and you'll also encounter numerous flying demons. They don't like missiles so much. You'll find the Healing Heart and the Mercless sword in the small courtyard. Once you find the switches, go into the room with the creepy eye goo; a spider boss will appear. His front legs will block attacks, so get close and strike with the sword to open him back up. Roll side-to-side to avoid his fire attack.

## MISSION 15

This mission is confusing because they don't really tell you what you need to do. Whack the eye with your sword to set off the 3 minute timer.

Attack or avoid the monsters for 3 minutes, then do it two more times. Be sure to find the brown lump on the floor—it's the Chrono Heart.



## MISSION 16

Hop into the elevator (clear out your co-passengers) and ride to the top. In the room with the rolling red balls lies

a full blue orb and the first of the three Sacrileges you need to open doors. If you see a vase, break it—it might contain a pair of fully functional submachine guns, which you'll need. Clear the area and head toward the southeast part of the map. Hey, it's the wolf guy! Again! Do it to him one more time, then find the room with the four statues. Hit the switch, take out the statues, grab the Frost Heart, and then go back through the level and hop onto the elevator.



## MISSION 17

It's time to finish off Arias. It's basically the same battle as before, but with more enemies and a couple Lucia-like clones to distract you. Arias is quite possibly the wimpiest final boss ever: Oh wait, we're not done yet...



## MISSION 18

You call this a challenge? The first form of the final boss is an amalgamation of all the bosses you've vanquished. There's only one or two that will give you any problem—stay to the side and pick 'em off one by one with the submachine gun or missile launcher. The final form is a winged fire demon with three main attacks: a whip, a projectile swarm, and an energy rain. All can easily be avoided by either keeping your distance or rolling out of the way. The demon does not mix well with bullets—just so you know. **16**



# XENOSAGA!

WHO IS ERDE KAISER? GMA DECONSTRUCTS THE MYSTERY, STEP-BY-STEP. IT'LL FLIP YA

**➔** In *Xenosaga*, every character has special abilities and attacks, called ether attacks. Of all the varied ether abilities, none is more spectacular (or damaging) than Shion's Erde Kaiser attack.

Acquiring the Erde Kaiser requires the gamer to find six robot parts scattered around the game. In order to find these parts, you'll need specific segment file numbers, the proper locations of each hidden part, and a decoder to open the locked doors containing said parts. It's a lot of effort, but the end result is worth it. As you can tell by the Voltron-esque sequence of events that follow, the Erde Kaiser ether attack is nothing short of incredible. *GMA* provides the deets. Happy hunting! **►**



01



02



03

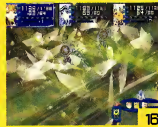
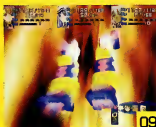


04

# THE COMPLETE PARTS LIST-EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BUILD A BETTER MECH

SEGMENT FILE #	LOCATION	ROBO PARTS	DECODER	DECODER LOCATION
1	Kuake Foundation Roof of Our Treasure (line)	Robot Parts Head	Decoder 1	Talk to the Tom in the Dock Colony's weapon shop to learn about the Pink Bug. Then talk to the Pink Bug in King's warehouse on Kuake Foundation City Sector 26/27, and select "Break away." Then check the Hunter in Daranda's Observatory.
2	Dock Colony Junk Shop	Robot Parts Torso	Decoder 2	Defeat Afters 26 Series that appears on the central floor of the second tower on Song of Nephilim System (destroy the fourth box in the location where five boxes are in a line).
3	Kuake Foundation Cleaner's 1F	Robot Parts Right Leg	Decoder 3	The treasure box in Banne's house in the Encoffing.
7	Waglands Front of Surgeport Major Swagger	Robot Parts Right Arm	Decoder 7	Talk to Swaine on Waglands during the Onesis attack.
8	Elsa Corridor of the cargo bay	Robot Parts Left Leg	Decoder 8	Before the Onesis attack, talk to the woman in Ironman bar in Kuake Foundation City Sector 26/27 to learn about the Engagement Ring. Search the White sub in the 2F of the Cleaners to obtain Fish Detector. Go to Bargman's Private Beach and catch the fish that has the Engagement Ring, and then return to the bar to give the ring back to the woman.
9	Inside, Onesis Mothership Research L1-B3F	Robot Parts Left Arm	Decoder 9	The treasure box guarded by SirBog (the long armed monster) inside the Onesis Mothership.

## THE FULL-ON ERDE KAISER ASSEMBLY SEQUENCE ERDE KAISER GO GO GO!





# A.I.

HIS CODES ARE REAL. BUT HE IS NOT



## 02 HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN PS4, XBOX



➔ There are several codes to make life (and death) easier for Agent 47. Check out the lists below. The level select codes are entered at the Main menu, the rest during gameplay.

### PLAYSTATION 2

**Level select**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, Square, Triangle, O  
**Level skip**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, D, X, D, X  
**God mode**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, R2, L2, R1, L1  
**All weapons**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, Square, X  
**Full health**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, Down  
**Lethal charge**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, R1, R1  
**Slow motion**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, L2  
**Punch mode**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, Up  
**Toggle gravity**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L2, L2  
**Bomb mode**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, Up, L1  
**Megaforce mode**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, R2, R2  
**Nailgun mode**  
R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L1, L1

### XBOX

**Level select**  
Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, Y, B  
**Level skip**  
Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, X, click Left Analog-stick, B, A, B, A  
**God mode**  
Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Black, White  
**All weapons**  
Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, Up, X, A  
**Full health**  
Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, Up, Down  
**Lethal charge**  
Left Trigger, Right Trigger, Up, Down, A, Black, Black  
**Slow motion**  
Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, Up, Left Trigger

## 01 GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY PS2

➔ Our Vice City code list was such a smash, we managed to dig out even more for Rockstar's smash hit and the fastest-selling game of 2002. Note: These codes are not endorsed by Rockstar and might stop you from obtaining a 100 percent finished rating. They may also corrupt a saved file, so you might not want save your game after using them. Use at your own risk.

### Vehicles Drive on Water

(except motorcycles)  
Right, R2, D, R1, L2, Square, R1, R2

### Vehicles Fly (except motorcycles)

Right, R2, D, R1, L2, Down, L1, R1

### Instant Rhino

O, O, L1, O, O, D, L1, L2, R1, Triangle, D, Triangle

### Instant Hotring Racer #1

R1, O, R2, Right, L1, L2, X, X, Square, R1, R2

### Instant Hotring Racer #2

R2, L1, O, Right, L1, R1, Right, Up, O, R2

### Instant Bloodring Banger

Down, R1, O, L2, L2, X, R1, L1, Left, Left

### Instant Bloodring Banger #2

Up, Right, Right, L1, Right, Up, Square, L2

### Instant Trashmaster

O, R1, O, R1, Left, Left, R1, L1, D, Right

### Instant Sabre Turbo

Right, L2, Down, L2, L2, X, R1, L1, D, Left

### Instant Romero's Hearse

Down, R2, Down, R1, L2, Left, R1, L1, Left, Right

### Instant Love Fist

R2, Up, L2, Left, Left, R1, L1, O, Right

### Instant Caddie

O, L1, Up, R1, L2, X, R1, L1, O, X

### Play as Lance Vance

O, L2, Left, X, R1, L1, X, L1

### Play as Candy Sucoo

D, R2, Down, R1, Left, Right, R1, L1, X, L2

### Play as Mercedes

R2, L1, Up, L1, Right, R1, Right, Up, O, Triangle

### Play as Ken Rosenberg

Right, L1, Up, L2, L1, Right, R1, L1, X, R1

### Play as Ricardo Diaz

L1, L2, R1, R2, Down, L1, R2, L2

### Play as Hilary King

R1, D, R2, L1, Right, R1, L1, X, R2

### Play as Love Fist Guy #1

Down, L1, Down, L2, Left, X, R1, L1, X, X

### Play as Love Fist Guy #2

R1, L2, R2, L1, Right, R2, Left, X, Square, L1

### Play as Phil Cassidy

Right, R1, Up, R2, L1, Right, R1, L1, Right, O

### Play as Sonny Forelli

O, L1, O, L2, Left, X, R1, L1, X, X





#### Punch mode

Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, Up, Up

#### Toggle gravity

Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, Left Trigger, Left Trigger

#### Bomb mode

Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, Up, White

#### Megaforce mode

Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, Right Trigger, Right Trigger

#### Nailgun mode

Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Up, Down, A, White, White

### 03 RATCHET AND CLANK PS2



➔ There are several cheats for one of the hottest platformers to hit PlayStation 2 in recent years, but you must first win the game. Once Drekk has been defeated, start a new game, pause it, then go to the Cheat option at the Goodies menu. From there, enter these combinations:

#### Gaining Full Health Grants Temporary Invincibility

Comet-Strike, Comet-Strike, Comet-Strike, Comet-Strike, Flip Back, Full Second Crouch, Flip Back, Full Second Crouch, Comet-Strike, Comet-Strike, Comet-Strike, Comet-Strike.

#### Ratchet has a Giant Head

Flip Back, Flip Back, Flip Back, Full Second Crouch, Stretch Jump, Full Second Glide.

#### Clank has a Giant Head

Flip Back, Hyper-Strike, Comet-Strike, Double Jump, Hyper-Strike, Flip Left, Flip Right, Full Second Crouch.

#### Enemies have Giant Heads

Stretch Jump, Flip Back, Flip Back, Flip Back, Stretch Jump, Flip Back, Flip Back, Flip Back, Stretch Jump, Flip Back, Flip Back, Flip Back, Full Second Crouch.

#### NPCs have Giant Heads

Flip Left, Flip Right, Flip Back, Flip Back, Flip Back, Comet-Strike, Double Jump, Comet-Strike, Hyper-Strike.

#### Levels are Mirrored

Flip Left, Flip Left, Flip Left, Flip Left, 3-Hit Wrench Combo, Hyper-Strike, Flip Right, Flip Right, Double Jump, Flip Right, Flip Right, Double Jump, Full Second Crouch.

### 04 RESIDENT EVIL 0 GAMECUBE



#### ➔ Unlock the Leech Hunter Minigame

Complete the main game with an A, B, C, or D ranking.

### 05 DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI PS2

➔ We've got the scoop on how to unlock all the characters in the newest Dragon Ball Z title.



#### Unlock Cell

Defeat Cell in Story mode.

#### Unlock Frieza

Defeat Frieza in Story mode.

#### Unlock Dodoria

Defeat Frieza while playing as Vegeta in Story mode.

#### Unlock Ginyu

Defeat Ginyu after he takes Goku's body in Story mode.

#### Unlock Great Saiyaman

Win the World Tournament in Advanced mode.

#### Unlock Hercule

Win the World Tournament in Adept mode.

#### Unlock Legend of Hercule Mode

Win the World Tournament in Adept



#### Leech Hunter Minigame Rewards

Complete the Leech Hunter Game with the following ranks to unlock these rewards in the main game.

- A - Unlimited ammunition for any weapon
- B - Magnum
- C - Hunting Gun
- D - Handgun
- E - Submachine Gun

### 06 BATTLEFIELD 1942 PC



➔ If you're having trouble waging war, we have a few codes to ease your burden. Begin by pressing the Tilde key (~) to activate the Cheat mode. From there, enter these codes. The codes are case sensitive.

#### Invincibility

alCheats.code Tobias.Karlsson

#### Kill enemy bots

alCheats.code Jonathan.Gustavsson

#### Kill bots

alCheats.code Thomas.Skoldenborg

#### Bots cheat

alCheats.code Bots.CanCheatToo

#### New spawn location

alCheats.code WalkingsWayTooTiresome

### 07 AGE OF MYTHOLOGY PC



➔ There are tons of codes for this award-winning title. Press Enter to activate the Cheat mode, then type in a code and unleash your wrath.

#### Cheat

1,000 Gold

ATM OF EREBUS

1,000 Wood

TROJAN HORSE FOR SALE

1,000 Food

JUNK FOOD NIGHT

Full favor

MOUNT OLYMPUS

Reveal Map

LAY OF THE LAND

Hide map

UNCERTAINTY AND DOUBT

Reveals all animals on map

SET ASCENDANT

Win game

THRILL OF VICTORY

Skip to next campaign scenario

## CHANNEL SURFING

Faster building  
L33T SUPA H4X0R

Restore a previously used power

OIVINE INTERVENTION

Random god powers

PANDORAS BOX

Turn all units into goats

GOATUNHEIM

Chicken-meteor power

BAWK BAWK BOOM

Monkey Invasion

I WANT THE MONKEYS!!!!

Flying purple hippopotamus

WUY WOO

Laser-equipped bear

O CANADA

Heroes from the campaign

ISIS HEAR MY PLEA

Slow down units

CONSIDER THE INTERNET

Change game time to night

IN DARKEST NIGHT

Turn water red

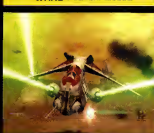
RED TIDE

Lightning Storm, Earthquake, Meteor,

and Tornado powers

WRATH OF THE GODS

## 08 STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS



➔ Enter the codes below and the galaxy is yours. The first code is for the PlayStation 2 version, the second is for the GameCube version.

Multiplayer Level Select

JORG SACUL/FRAGFIESTA

Campaign Level Select

DOORDONOT/GASMASK

Invincibility

OARKSIOE/1WITHFORCE

Unlimited Secondary

and Special Weapon

SUPERLASER/CHOSEN1

Three Bonus Objectives

for Current Mission Marked Complete

GIMME/YUB\_YUB

Unlock Battle Droid

In Academy: Geonosis

TRADEFED/ROGERROGER

Unlock Padmé Amidala

In Academy: Geonosis

NATALIE/CORDE

## 09 THE MARK OF KRI



➔ Having trouble cracking skulls? Enter these bad boys at the Press Start screen to even out the odds. You'll hear Rau grunt if you've entered them correctly.

## 10 MINORITY REPORT

➔ Life's rough when you're on the run for something you didn't even do [yet]. Give yourself the edge with these codes:



Invincibility

LRGARM5

Level Select

PASSKEY

Level Skip

QUITER

All Combos

NINJA

All Weapons

STRAPPEO

Maximum Ammunition

MRJUAREZ

Maximum Damage

SPINACH

Extra Health

BUTTERUP

Free Aim

FPSSTYLE

Armor

STEELUP

Slow Motion Button

SLUZGIMZO

Play as Nara

WEIGHTGAIN

Play as Nikki

HAIRLOSS

Invincibility

Square, 0, X, Square, 0, Square, X, 0, X, Square, 0, X. Then enter the Cheats section at the Sage and activate the last card.

All Health Power-ups Give Full Life

X, X, X, X, Square, Square, Square,

Square, 0, 0, 0, 0

Disable Arena A.I.

X, 0, 0, 0, X, Square, Square, Square, X,

0, Square, X

Unlimited Arrows

Press X, 0, Square, Square, X, Square, 0,

0, X, Square, Square, X

## 11 MADDEN NFL 2002



➔ Infinite Creation Points

Create a new player, then go to Edit Player mode. Select Speed, then select Attributes. You will now have 99 points in each category.

## 12 THE SIMS: UNLEASHED



➔ Enable Cheat mode by pressing Control + Shift + C.

Infinite Money

After enabling the Cheat mode, type rosebud; (include the semicolon and colon). Hold down the Enter key. "No such cheat" will flash on the screen, but keep the key held for tons of cash.

Surprise Visit from the Loch Ness Monster

Type nessie

# 13 ZOO TYCOON PS2



➔ Having trouble running your zoo? Rename one of your guests as below to activate the following cheats:

## All scenarios

Akiyama  
All animal toys  
Lou Catanzaro  
All animal buildings  
Andrew Blinder  
All animal care buildings  
Adam Levesque  
All animal shelters available  
John Wheeler  
All researchable endangered animals  
Steve Serafino  
All research complete  
Hank Howie  
Extra money every day  
Moneybags

# 14 RAMPAGE PUZZLE ATTACK GBA



➔ Enter GJPNLPTNQ as your password to unlock all levels and characters.

# 15 HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING PS2



➔ To instantly get full health, press R2, L2, R1, O, Triangle, L2, X, Square during gameplay.

# 16 ROCKY PS2

➔ "Yo, Adrian! Watch me kick his ass!" Enter these codes at the Main menu for some serious pugilistic power.



## Double Punch Damage

Hold R1 and press Right, Down, Left, Up, Left, L1.

## Double Speed Boxing

Hold R1 and press Down, Left, Down, Up, Right, L1.

## Full Stats in Tournament and Exhibition Modes

Hold R1 and press Left, Up, Up, Down, Right, L1.

## Full Stats in Movie Mode

Hold R1 and press Right, Down, Down, Up, Left, L1.

# 17 SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS PS2



➔ Even Superman can have bad days at the office. Use these if you're having trouble flying faster than a speeding

bullet. Enter them in the Cheat Codes screen under the Options menu.

## Master code

MYZPTLK  
Unlimited Superpowers  
JOR EL  
Unlimited Health  
SMALLVILLE  
All Biographies  
LARA  
All FMV Sequences  
LARA LANG  
Expert Mode  
BIZZARO

# 18 DAVE MIRRA BMX GBA



➔ To unlock the hidden characters Metal and Flash, enter this sequence at the Title screen. R button, R button, L button, L button, B, B, L button, and R button. If you've done it right, you'll hear a chime.

# 19 LILO AND STITCH GBA



➔ To get 99 lives in the latest Disney title, highlight the Start Game option at the Main menu. Then hold R + Select and press A.

# 20 TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER XBOX



➔ Life can be tough when you're a tiger...but not when you're a god. To enter God mode, go to the Title screen then press White, Black, White, Black, Y, Y, Y, Y, B, and B.

## SCREEN

MATT D. CAN'T REMEMBER WHO HE IS. ALIENS ARE ILL-PREPARED. AND OUR THEME

—“You’re a Jew? In *All The Pretty Horses*. So what?”

# THE BOURNE IDENTITY

DAMON AS AN ACTION STAR? SURE.

➔ Directed by Doug Liman (*Swingers* and *Go!*), *The Bourne Identity* might seem a lightweight thrill. It's not.

Forgotten identities, martial arts, cool spy tricks, and the most exhilarating car chase in recent history combine with inventive direction to deliver a skilful thriller. Matt Damon leads convincingly in a refreshing, youthful update on your typical "George Smiley" spy.

Bourne is fished out of the Mediterranean with bullet holes in his back and a computer chip embedded under his skin. He has no idea who he is or why he's half-dead. The adventure begins and immediately we're along for

the ride—as in the dark about Bourne's true identity as he himself is.

The computer chip leads to a Swiss deposit box containing a collection of clues including passports (one in the name of Jason Bourne), lots of cash, and a gun. Bourne now has an idea of who he is but it's still murky.

He pays a stranger (*Run Lola Run*'s Franka Potente) \$10,000 to drive him to Paris, and he gets to discover his incredible driving talents in a spectacular car chase through narrow Parisian alleys.

The movie's engaging device is that we learn, along with

Bourne, about the skills he never knew he had—the driving, some first-class martial ass-kicking and keen observation. He's also surprised to learn that he's fluent in more than one language. He knows somebody is out to get him.

Matt Damon is the keystone here and he gives a mature yet edgy performance that is pitch perfect.

**Special features** on the widescreen DVD include a host of deleted scenes, an alternate ending (hope, we're not telling you what it is), a making-of documentary, and the obligatory feature commentary with film's director, Liman. **B+**

# TRIPLE FEAR-TURE

IN KEEPING WITH THE ISSUE'S THEME, ALASDAIR MANSON SAYS HELLO TO THREE LITTLE FRIENDS...



## SIGNS WAIT...WATERP?

➔ **M. Night Shyamalan** (*The Sixth Sense*) is back with another atmospheric look at the dark side. An ex-minister, now farmer (Mel Gibson) finds crop circles in his fields, which he assumes are the work of local pranksters. TV news reports from far and wide begin to suggest something rather more otherworldly than he is prepared to believe.

A sense of dread builds with creative but restrained direction—children's voices, footsteps, and shadows are used to spine-tingling effect. The movie also provokes some thought on issues like loneliness and faith. And circles.

Among the special features on the disc is an insightful documentary about the making of the movie. **B+**



## ROBOTS!

➔ Children find increasingly uneasy around Michael Jackson and his "punk friends".



## DEVILS!

➔ "So, I tell you, we're not going to the beach."



## GANGSTERS!

➔ "Hey, Ebert!"

## ➔ A.I.

Stanley Kubrick—who taught us a thing or two about robots in 2001—started work on *A.I.* 12 years before his death in 1999. Steven Spielberg took over and completed the project, giving us a fascinating, often pretentious, slightly muddled, but altogether entertaining tale about a robot boy who learns to love. *A.I.* asks many more questions than it answers; it's a vast work full of original ideas. You'll probably love it or hate it—there's little middle ground here—but either way, you should definitely see it.

## ➔ THE OMEN

There are few cinematic tools more disturbing than demonic children (what about demonic dolls? —Ed), and no movie disturbs as well as *The Omen*. This first in a series of four features centers on Damien—the Son of Satan on Earth in the body of a young boy—and his role in the (un)earthly battle between Good and Evil. This movie set many standards for the horror genre and even approaching its 30th birthday, it still has the capacity to scare the pants off the audience. Dark, brooding, and stylish—just our cup of tea/blood.

## ➔ SCARFACE

A climber was once asked why he climbed Everest. His answer was "because it was there." There are numerous mountains in *Scarface*, not least of which is a mountain of adversity facing Tony Montana (Al Pacino)—a Cuban immigrant to the U.S. in the early 80s. Another mountain is the huge pile of cocaine he trades in his ascent to the top of the crime ladder. No oxygen and crampons for Tony Montana but lots and lots of guns. He breaks his own Rule No. 1 ("I don't get high on your own supply") and enters a hellacious downward spiral. *A.I.* Pacino delivers a powerhouse performance. **A-**



➔ "Behold, a load of pretentious rubbish!"



➔ Society was cruel in those days, and they tried to hide their love.



➔ "Scarface was a joke, okay?"



# THE LIST

GMA'S EXHAUSTIVE GUIDE TO THE ONLY GAMES THAT MATTER

BUYER'S GUIDE

## TOP 100 PS2 GAMES LOTS OF GAMES. OH YEAH.

TIME	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	GAME RATING
<b>Age Combat 4: Shattered Skies</b>	Namco	After experimenting with, well, experimental planes in <i>Age Combat 3</i> , Namco returned to the real jets this time.	7
<b>Aggressive Inline</b>	Acclaim	From the makers of <i>Dave Mirra BMX</i> comes a just-as-playable inline skating game with a simple trick system and large levels.	8
<b>ATV Offroad Fury</b>	Sony	The key to being a successful ATV offroader lies in launching yourself through the air as often as possible. A fun and floaty racer.	8
<b>Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance</b>	Interplay	A beautiful-looking Dungeons & Dragons based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	9
<b>Burnout 2: Point of Impact</b>	Acclaim	An aggressive driving simulator that defies the rules of physics. Includes a dedicated crash mode for aspiring demolition derby stars.	8
<b>Capcom vs. SNK 2</b>	Capcom	Take the best elements of <i>Street Fighter</i> and <i>King of Fighters</i> , and you'll have the best thing going in the world of 2D fighters.	8
<b>Contra: Shattered Soldier</b>	Konami	After numerous shoddy attempts to bring the classic <i>Contra</i> game play to a next-gen system, Konami finally gets it right.	9
<b>Crazy Taxi</b>	Sony	As good as opening your PlayStation 2, rigging Dreamcast hardware inside, and then loading up a Dreamcast build of <i>Crazy Taxi</i> .	8
<b>Dance Dance Revolution: DDRMax</b>	Konami	Before, if you wanted to play DDR you'd have to subject yourself to Joe and Jane Public. Now you can embarrass yourself at home.	8
<b>Dark Cloud</b>	Sony	Equal parts RPG, simulation, and world-builder, <i>Dark Cloud</i> pays homage to RPGs past while establishing its own unique identity.	8
<b>Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2</b>	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, XXX was based on Dave Mirra and it actually focused on... get this... biking.	8
<b>Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore</b>	Techno	Before the entire series went X-Box exclusive, Team Ninja's gang of jiggly grapplers found a temporary home on the PS2.	8
<b>Deus Ex: The Conspiracy</b>	Edios	One of the best PC games of 2000 is ported faithfully to the PS2. Upgrade your characters skills and attributes to your liking.	9
<b>Devil May Cry</b>	Capcom	Did you know <i>Devil May Cry</i> was going to be <i>Resident Evil 4</i> , before it was spun off into its own series? Oh, you did? Nevermind then.	9
<b>Dynasty Warriors 3</b>	Koei	Melee combat set to the history of ancient China. Enemies number in the hundreds along branching paths of the story.	8
<b>Escape from Monkey Island</b>	Sony Online	LucasArts has a fine tradition of putting out excellent graphical adventure games, and this latest charmer is no exception.	9
<b>EverQuest Online Adventures</b>	LucasArts	PS2 owners finally get to see what this whole <i>EverQuest</i> thing is about—and will never be seen again.	9
<b>F1 2002</b>	EA Sports	Minor refinements over the 2001 version may not be enough to justify the upgrade, but it's still a solid F1 game.	8
<b>FIFA 2001</b>	Electronic Arts	Until Konami's <i>Winning Eleven</i> series hits American shores, we'll have to deal with the FIFA franchise. Which is not a bad thing.	9
<b>Final Fantasy X</b>	Square EA	The PS2's first <i>Final Fantasy</i> does away the traditional overworld, but introduces full voice acting. Artistically beautiful, as always.	9
<b>Freelife</b>	EA Sports Big	It's SSX, only with dirt and bikes instead of snow and boards. Another over-the-top and energetic effort from EA's Big label.	9
<b>Grand Turismo 3 A-spc</b>	Sony	Core gameplay is unchanged, but the graphics get a complete overhaul—which makes GT3 the best playing, looking sim on the market.	10
<b>Grand Theft Auto III</b>	Rockstar Games	A phenomenon in terms of both gameplay and sales. A free-roaming interactive mobster film that's sold over 8 million copies to date.	10
<b>Grand Theft Auto: Vice City</b>	Rockstar Games	As bad boy Tommy Vercetti, there's something indescribably cool about cruising Vice City's beach strip while rocking to "Billie Jean."	10
<b>Half-Life</b>	Sierra	After it got cancelled for Dreamcast, a console version of this PC classic didn't seem very likely. But here we are.	10
<b>Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland</b>	Natsume	It's a farming simulator. It's fun. These two statements may seem wildly incongruous, but somehow <i>Harvest Moon</i> makes it work.	8
<b>High Heat Major League Baseball 2003</b>	3DO	It's not just look like something special, but the <i>High Heat</i> series excels at providing a deep and comprehensive game of baseball.	8
<b>Hitman 2</b>	Edios	Most of the problems with the original <i>Hitman</i> have been fixed, making this one of the more rewarding action games on the PS2.	9
<b>Hot Shots Golf 3</b>	Sony	Some golf games need something extra to attract gamers. How about arcade-style control, annoying taunts, and multiplayer modes?	9
<b>Ico</b>	Sony	An underappreciated work of art with challenging puzzles, fantastic lighting, and engrossing character relationships.	9
<b>Jade Cocoon 2</b>	Ubi Soft	A notable improvement over its predecessor, and an equally as addicting feature of monster breeding.	9
<b>Jax and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy</b>	Sony	The studio that gave birth to <i>Crash Bandicoot</i> brings a couple of new mascots and new gorgeous 3D world to the PS2.	8
<b>Jet X20</b>	Sony	More extreme sports fun, but this time it's all wet. Finishing is only half the battle: performing tricks factors into the final standings.	8
<b>Kingdom Hearts</b>	Square EA	When the amazing, talented artists from Square join forces with the amazing, talented artists from Disney, good things happen.	8
<b>Klonoa 2: Lunatic's Veil</b>	Namco	Klonoa became a rare find in the later days of PlayStation. The outstanding sequel looks to share the same fate. Grab it if you can.	8
<b>Le Mans 24 Hours</b>	Infogrames	There's an option to play the famous endurance race true-to-life: 24 hours straight of driving. Better stick up on Mountain Dew.	8
<b>The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers</b>	EA Games	Anything bearing the valuable <i>Lord of the Rings</i> license will sell well. Happily, there's more to this best 'em up than just the license.	8
<b>Madden NFL 2003</b>	EA Sports	The series' first foray into online console gaming is a success. Everything you love about Madden can now be shared with strangers.	9
<b>The Mark of Kri</b>	Sony	A slick action game with innovative controls: each button is assigned to a different enemy, allowing for combat with multiple targets.	9
<b>Maximo: Ghosts to Glory</b>	Capcom	It's the spiritual successor to the classic <i>Ghosts 'n Goblins</i> , complete with heart-beaters and insane difficulty.	8
<b>MDK 2 Armageddon</b>	Interplay	Much-improved over the original Dreamcast incarnation, <i>MDK 2 Armageddon</i> is one of the better action games in recent times.	8
<b>Medal of Honor: Frontline</b>	Electronic Arts	A strong single-player campaign paves the way through the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
<b>Metal Gear Solid 2</b>	Konami	This highly anticipated sequel throws a real curveball early on in the game. It was probably the least confusing part of the story.	9
<b>Midnight Club</b>	Rockstar Games	This enjoyable and energetic one-on-one street racer from Rockstar provides a refreshing change of pace from the usual fare.	8
<b>Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon</b>	Namco	Giant robots are great, but basing them on the Gundam license with Capcom developing makes them greater, if that's even possible.	8
<b>MotorGP</b>	Bandai	Solid motorcycle racing, but if you have a choice go with the sequel. It's got twice the number of tracks, among other enhancements.	8
<b>MOTORGP 2</b>	Namco	An excellent motorcycle racer with an arcade-like mode for novices and a sim mode for those who want to get their hands dirty.	8
<b>NASCAR Thunder 2003</b>	EA Sports	Hate driving left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you "get it," <i>Thunder 2003</i> should be right up your alley.	9
<b>NBA 2K3</b>	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to own a PS2 network adapter, NBA2K3 is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
<b>NBA Live 2003</b>	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a full simulation.	8

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	IGN RATING
NBA Street	Electronic Arts	All the trash-talking and showmanship of inner city basketball, from the comfort of your suburban home. But why is it only for 2?	8
NCAA Football 2002	Electronic Arts	Whenever an EA Sports game makes a "best of" list, rest assured previous years' versions aren't far behind.	9
NCAA Football 2003	EA Sports	A lot like Madden, only with exploited college kids, marching bands, and the option. It's also the best college football game available.	9
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	EA Games	Strangely, the best version of is on the least-powerful hardware. Running from cops has never been this fun, or free of consequence.	9
NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly-entrenched Madden juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	So you like football games but don't care for playcalling strategy, formations, and clock management? Blitz has been here for years.	8
NHL 2002	Electronic Arts	Hockey is played on ice, with six men trying to put a puck into the other team's goal. This is a good digital representation of that sport.	9
NHL 2K3	Sega Sports	For the more discerning hockey connoisseur, NHL2K3 has made great strides since its debut on the now-defunct Dreamcast.	9
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	The effort put forward in defeating Nobun in Onimusha has gone to waste, as he's risen from the dead and appearing in the sequel.	8
Onimusha: Warlords	Capcom	Survival horror with a taste for feudal Japan, gorgeous artistic design, and a whole lot more action than its Resident Evil kin.	8
RAD: Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	It's hard to go wrong with giant robots blowing stuff up, but Enix latest effort goes one step further with a novel control scheme.	8
Ratchet & Clank	Sony	Insomniac's terrific action-platformer has you jumping from world to world in search of new weapons and gadgets.	8
Rayman 2: Revolution	Ubisoft	One of the best 3D platformers available, the Rayman franchise doesn't get the attention it deserves: It's good, and you should buy it.	9
Real Pool	Infogrames	It's real. It's pool. If for some reason it had curved tables, exploding balls, and flaming cues, then it would be fake pool.	8
Red Faction	THQ	A first-person shooter that features destructible environments, drivable vehicles, and a strong single player campaign.	9
Red Faction II	THQ	As entertaining as the original, but with a shorter campaign mode and detrimental framerate issues. Still worth checking out.	7
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	Capcom	More of a true of a sequel than Resident Evil 3, it's Dreamcast debut meant that many fans missed out. Problem solved!	8
Rez	Sega	A fairly standard shooter dressed as a visual and aural masterpiece. Sadly unappreciated by the vast majority of the gaming world.	8
Ridge Racer V	Namco	The always enjoyable Ridge Racer series scores well, thanks to solid control, enthralling sense of speed, and a fitting soundtrack.	8
Robotech: Battleroy	TDK Medactive	Col-shaped graphics effectively capture the look and feel of the classic 1980s cartoon. Especially enjoyable for fans of the series.	7
Rumble Racing	Electronic Arts	This fun arcade racer originally started out with the Nascar license, but it was dropped in favor of original designs.	8
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	This Greek mythology-based action game is an update of the arcade and NES classic in name only. Fun combat and great music.	9
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega	Arcade style tennis perfection when it launched for the Dreamcast. It's holding up just as well on the PS2, too.	8
Silent Hill 2	Konami	More creepy than downright scary, the Silent Hill series takes a more sophisticated, cerebral approach to the survival horror genre.	8
The Sims	Electronic Arts	A new mode helps you figure out how to keep your Sim from pissing himself. Or, if you're like that, how to make him do it.	9
Sky Gunner	Atari	If you can look past the slowdown issue (and it can be a pretty big issue at times), Sky Gunner is great shooting fun.	8
Sky Odyssey	Activision	A flight game that channels the spirit of Planescape with mission-based gameplay and a large array of aircraft to pilot.	8
Sly Cooper and the Thieves' Ransom	Sony	A solid platformer with a unique aesthetic and animations. Lacks a little in the challenge department, a little on the short side, too.	8
Smuggler's Run	Rockstar Games	Keeping in touch Rockstar's games generally involving breaking the law, Smuggler's Run indulges the inner criminal in all of us.	8
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sony	Possibly the best reason to own a PS2 network adapter. The team-based military tactics work better online than off.	9
Spy Hunter	Midway	A re-creation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	8
SSX	Electronic Arts	A surprisingly good snowboarder with over-the-top stunts and great course design, it stands out as one of the better PS2 launch titles.	9
SSX Tricky	Electronic Arts	SSX Tricky boasts a new set of insane gravity-defying and physically impossible stunts, not to mention all-new tracks and characters.	9
Sub Rebellion	Metra3D	Customizable submarines rule the waters of the future. Sub Rebellion is an action game that's short on graphics but very entertaining.	8
Tekken Tag Tournament	Namco	Essentially Tekken 3 with enhanced graphics and a tag-teaming. Which isn't bad, considering Tekken 3 is a great game to begin with.	8
Theme Park Roller Coaster	Electronic Arts	Sim City meets Six Flags. Design your own dangerous rollercoasters without fear of getting slapped with wrongful death lawsuits.	8
Time Crisis 2	Namco	What better way to debut the GunCon 2? Two players shoot cooperatively, teaming up and watching each other's backs.	7
TimeSplitters	Eidos	Many responsible for NAA's Goldeneye are also responsible for this, and it shows. A great shooter with loads of multiplayer options.	8
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	8
Tokyo Xremer Racer Zero	Crave	Cruise Tokyo's highways in search of less-than-legal street racing action. Despite some visual issues, it's definitely worth checking out.	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	The first hawk to land on the PS2. Neversoft upped the speed and added the revert, allowing for better combo opportunities.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	Neversoft dropped the two-minute time limit in Career mode, and added an array of objectives. Level design is a step up from THPS3.	9
Twisted Metal: Black	Sony	With the franchise safely out of the hands of 989 Studios, Twisted Metal makes a welcome return to its former, gruesome glory.	9
Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony	If you buy a PS2 network adapter, you get it for free. Which kind of makes sense, considering you can't play it without one.	10
Virtua Fighter 4	Sega	The Virtua Fighter series has always been finely crafted, and this version is no exception. The depth of this game is staggering.	10
War of the Monsters	SCEA	King Kong's agent wanted a cool \$20 bill for this fun beat-em-up, but Sony balked and went with the less-recognizable Kongar.	9
Wild Arms 3	Sony	A grand adventure with a wild west theme, endearing characters, great music, and a refreshingly uncomplicated battle system.	8
Wipout Fusion	Bam	The Designer's Republic touch may be missing, but the series' old-milited, never surpassed style of racing remains intact.	8
WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It	THQ	Even if this game scored a zero, it would still sell a truckload of copies. Such is the marketing power of Vince McMahon & Family.	8
Zone of the Enders	Konami	A straightforward action game with great motion design and an excellent camera, but repetitive battle and an abrupt story.	8

## [BUY]

### KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL

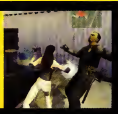
➔ The follow-up to a side-scrolling platformer with cult-status appeal, kid-friendly Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil features rock-solid gameplay, an endearing (read: cute) visual style, and magical musical motifs. A little short, but consistently sweet and stylish.



## [AVOID]

### DARK ANGEL

➔ Somebody messed up the planning on this one: The show was cancelled almost a year ago, but the game is coming out now. Like the ill-fated and uneven James Cameron drama, Dark Angel the game will come and go without anyone noticing.



# PC TOP 50 PC GOES MEDIEVAL

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	OUR RATING
<b>Alena vs. Predator 2</b>	Sierra	Three completely different first-person-shooters combined into one dark and terrifying gaming experience.	9
<b>Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn</b>	Interplay	The rare occasion when the sequel to a classic goes above and beyond its predecessor. Can't wait for III.	10
<b>Black &amp; White</b>	EA Games	Highly conceptual "god-game" that has you ruling over mortals with a little help from a giant cow-monster.	10
<b>Battlefield 1942</b>	EA Games	Multiplayer shooter set in WWII that lets you jump in and out of vehicles (even planes!) while battling dozens of your friends.	10
<b>Civilization III</b>	Infogrames	Sid Meier's classic just keeps on rolling along, getting bigger and more complex while somehow managing to remain just as addictive.	10
<b>Commandos 2</b>	Eidos	Control a squad of elite commandos in WWII as they infiltrate, detonate, and assassinate across multiple battlefields.	9
<b>Diablo II: Lords of Destruction</b>	Blizzard	The sequel to the ultimate dungeon-crawling clickfest should please anyone who wasted their teens playing the first game.	9
<b>Dungeon Siege</b>	Microsoft	Hack and slash doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes it can even be in beautiful 3D with no loading time between levels.	9
<b>Enemy Engaged/Comanche v. Hokum</b>	Empire Int.	Extremely realistic attack chopper sim that's not for the weak of heart or impatient of trigger finger.	9
<b>EverQuest</b>	Sony Online	The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.	9
<b>EverQuest: Scars of Velious</b>	Sony Online	The expansion pack to EverCrack opens up new worlds, new characters, and tigers with boobies (finally!).	9
<b>F1 2002</b>	EA Sports	Delivers authentic yet accessible formula one racing enjoyment for every open-wheel racing fan out there.	9
<b>Fallout Tactics</b>	Interplay	Squad-based tactical strategy game set in the same universe as the classic Fallout rpg that sets a new standard.	10
<b>Freedom Force</b>	EA Games	Clever use of strategy and RPG elements help to make this witty comic book superhero-themed game one of the best.	10
<b>Front Office Football 2001</b>	EA Sports	Football management simulation at its purest: X's and O's mixed in with the complexities of drafting and the salary cap.	9
<b>Front Recon: Island Thunder</b>	Ubisoft	This top-notch mission pack makes a decent modern combat simulation into an outstanding one.	9
<b>Gaiares: Citizen Kabuto</b>	Interplay	A shooter/strategy hybrid full of weird british humor, unique and beautiful 3D graphics, and naked lady sea monsters.	9
<b>Grand Prix 4</b>	Infogrames	It's a tough choice for formula one fans, with GP4 and F1 2002 both being worthy of your hard earned dollars.	9
<b>Grand Theft Auto III</b>	Rockstar Games	The poster child for all that's wrong in gaming is chockfull of all that's fun in gaming. And you get to import your own MP3s.	10
<b>Hittman 2: Silent Assassin</b>	Eidos	An almost perfect blend of action and stealth, it's a humongous improvement over the first game.	9
<b>IL-2 Sturmovik</b>	Ubisoft	Amazingly realistic WWII flight sim covering a region seldom visited in computer games: the Easter Front.	10
<b>Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast</b>	LucasArts	Yeah, the lightsaber battles are sweet, but Lando's cameo just about seals the deal. And is his ship fly or what?	9
<b>Kohran: Ahirman's Gift</b>	Strategy First	Surprisingly accessible fantasy-themed real-time strategy that's as much fun in single player as against other mages online.	9
<b>Madden NFL 2003</b>	EA Sports	Finally as good as all the superior console football games out there, this one is a gridiron classic on the PC.	10
<b>Max Payne</b>	G.O.O.	Despite some corny writing, this uberhip noir videogame feels like a movie, but plays like a great action game.	9
<b>Medal of Honor: Allied Assault</b>	EA Games	Worth it just for the incredibly intense D-Day mission that almost matches the same scene in Saving Private Ryan.	9
<b>Medieval: Total War</b>	Acivision	The ultimate historical strategy game has everything from political intrigue to sweeping real-time battles.	10
<b>Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002</b>	Microsoft	The definitive civilian flight simulator. So authentic, actual airline pilots use it to keep their skills sharp.	9
<b>The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind</b>	Bethesda	The definitive, open-ended RPG epic. Sort of like GTA 3, but with magic and Elves and all that D&D flavor.	9
<b>Microsoft Madness 2</b>	Microsoft	It's mud-splattering, off-road superspin fun with this free-wheeling dirtbike simulator from the makers of ATV Offroad Fury.	9
<b>Myth III: The Wolf Age</b>	G.O.O.	Bungie's renowned magical real-time-strategy title goes 3D and maintains its fantastic multiplayer reputation.	9
<b>NASCAR Racing 4</b>	Vivendi Universal	Superior simulation of the nail-biting sport of stock racing, with amazingly realistic physics matched by a sublime 3D engine.	9
<b>Newswinter Nights</b>	Infogrames	If you're a D&D nerd then you already know, but buy this one for the multiplayer and user-made mods especially.	9
<b>No One Lives Forever</b>	Vivendi Universal	Austin Powers ain't got nothing on Gate Archer, the hottest digital chick with a gun since that old hag Lara Croft.	9
<b>No One Lives Forever 2</b>	Vivendi Universal	As funny and stylish as the original 60's spy spoof (if that's even possible) and more fun to play, too.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis</b>	Codemasters	The first in the highly original series of combat sims, this soldier/light/tank sim went on to win COW's 2001 game of the year.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Red Hammer</b>	Codemasters	Letting you play as the bad guys is the sure way into our hearts. Especially when they're nasty Russians.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Resistance</b>	Codemasters	Features and content worthy of a brand-new game, this is a benchmark expansion for a classic overlooked game.	9
<b>Rowan's Battle of Britain</b>	Empire Int.	Best re-creation of dogfighting ever seen in a WWII flight sim, which is saying something considering how many there are.	9
<b>Sacrifice</b>	Interplay	Action/strategy hybrid defies the conventions of all the genres it touches, while making for a fantastically original multiplayer experience.	9
<b>Serious Sam</b>	G.O.O.	Besides running and gunning is an underappreciated way to waste a couple of hours with a great-looking game.	9
<b>Sid Meier's Sim Golf</b>	EA Games	SimGolf will have you laying out golf courses and building resorts like a virtual Robert Trent Jones.	9
<b>Stronghold</b>	G.O.O.	Castle-building strategy game that's part medieval architecture sim, part siege engine showdown-boiling oil and all.	9
<b>The Sims</b>	EA Games	It's impossible to categorize EA's addictive superblockbuster life simulator, just like it's impossible to stop playing it.	10
<b>The Sims, Hot Date</b>	EA Games	Gamers everywhere rejoice! Finally a game where you can actually learn a thing or two about interacting with the opposite sex!	10
<b>The Sims: House Party</b>	EA Games	Get your soiree (not to mention your freak) on with this great addition to the Sims' amazing stable of add-on packs.	9
<b>The Sims Online</b>	EA Games	If you were merely a Sims addict before, all hope is now lost. All the world's a stage, and your online Sims persona can play any part.	9
<b>The Sims: Unleashed</b>	EA Games	Not just a great addition to EA's behemoth franchise, an essential one. Everyone needs a dog, or maybe a monkey.	10
<b>US Open 2002</b>	Strategy First	Hard to find fault with this fine tennis sim, especially since the sport is so woefully underrepresented on the platform.	9
<b>Warlords: Battlecry II</b>	Ubisoft	RTS and RPG, two great flavors that go great together, especially when stirred together with a big gnarly wizard's staff!	9

## [BUY!]

### MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR

Europe was a pretty messed-up place back in the Middle Ages, what with all the monarchies, diseases, theocracies, and war. Medieval: Total War is puts you right in the middle of it all.



## [AVOID!]

### CIVILIZATION III: PLAY THE WORLD

It was meant to be an expansion pack that brought Civilization II online, but all it ended up being was messy network code and unstable performance. There's not much here worth buying.



# XBOX TOP 50 A SYSTEM OF SUBSTANCE

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	IGN RATING
<b>Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance</b>	Vivendi Universal	A beautiful-looking Dungeons & Dragons based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	7
<b>Bliss: The Time Sweeper</b>	Microsoft	This green-eyed feline can control the flow of time, but puzzles designed around that concept are lacking. Great idea, flawed execution.	6
<b>Blood Omen 2</b>	Eidos	The Legacy of Kain story picks up where the original Blood Omen left off, with you in control of the evil-yet-likeable vampire Kain.	8
<b>Burnout</b>	Accolade	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes—much now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
<b>Col Damage</b>	Microsoft	Crazy cartoon car combat with great use of cut-shading and varied multiplayer options. It can quickly become repetitive, however.	6
<b>Colin McRae Rally 3</b>	Codemasters	Everybody's favorite rally racer Colin McRae has got a brand new game, featuring finely tuned physics and car damage.	9
<b>Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller</b>	Sega	It's hard to improve upon the original, but that didn't stop Sega from trying. Twice. The setting is new but it plays pretty much the same.	6
<b>Dead or Alive 3</b>	Tecmo	It's not the deepest of fighters, but it definitely competes for the best-looking prize. Plus, the girls are back in all their bouncy glory.	8
<b>Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball</b>	Tecmo	Pro tip: When playing DQAX, have your TV remote close by. If Mom bursts in, hit the surf button and Rip to The History Channel. She'll be proud.	6
<b>Fatal Frame</b>	Tecmo	It's creepy. It's gory. It's the Tecmo game without the boots. Another of those games better enjoyed with the lights off.	8
<b>Genia Onimusha</b>	Capcom	An enhanced port of the PS2 game, Genia Onimusha adds improved graphics, available 5.1 audio output, and a new type of soul energy.	7
<b>Halo</b>	Microsoft	The definitive reason to own an Xbox. There are plenty of secondary reasons, sure, but no Xbox owner should be without Halo.	10
<b>James Bond 007: Night Fire</b>	EA Sports	Goldeneye set an impossibly high standard for the Bond license, but Nightfire does an admirable job of recreating the feel of the films.	6
<b>Jet Set Radio Future</b>	Sega	Jet Set Radio Future has substance and an overabundance of style. Sega simplified tagging in favor of a more robust truck system.	9
<b>Madden NFL 2002</b>	Electronic Arts	It's a crowded genre on the Xbox, with three different franchises competing for your attention. Madden is always a safe bet.	8
<b>Max Payne</b>	Rockstar Games	The "bullet time" effect is the big draw of this action/shooter. Inspired by Hong Kong action flicks, set against a gritty New York City.	9
<b>MechAssault</b>	Microsoft	It's a good single-player game, but it really shines on Xbox Live, where you're pitted against other mech pilots.	8
<b>Medal of Honor: Frontline</b>	EA Games	A strong single-player campaign paves the way through the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
<b>Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance</b>	Konami	Includes the original MGS2: Sons of Liberty, 5 brand new missions featuring Solid Snake, and a slew of challenging VR missions.	9
<b>MotoGP: Ultimate Racing Technology</b>	THQ	Different from Namco's MotoGP games of the almost-exact same name, but just as good. Can be played via system link or online.	9
<b>NASCAR Thunder 2003</b>	EA Sports	Hole driving left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you "get it," Thunder 2003 should be right up your alley.	9
<b>NBA 2K3</b>	Sega Sports	'Yet another compelling reason to sign up for Xbox Live, NBA2K3 is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
<b>NBA Live 2003</b>	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	9
<b>NCAA College Basketball 2K3</b>	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities...	8
<b>NHL 2K3</b>	Sega	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly-entrenched Madden juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
<b>NHL Hitz 20-02</b>	Midway	"NHL Hitz" rhymes with "NFL Blitz." That's no mere coincidence. Hockey with no rules is just as fun as its lawless football counterpart.	6
<b>Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee</b>	Microsoft	Originally destined for PS2, the now-Xbox-exclusive Munch's Oddysee is a clever action/puzzle game with a great deal of character.	9
<b>Panzer Dragoon Orta</b>	Sega	Aesthetically beautiful and a dream to play. See what Saturn owners were enjoying seven years ago like original Panzer Dragoon is included.	8
<b>Phantom Crash</b>	Phantagram	The Xbox certainly isn't lacking in mech titles. The quirky, unique Phantom Crash has upgradeable mechs and a story-driven 1P mode.	7
<b>Project Gotham Racing</b>	Microsoft	The refinement of the Kudos point system is the biggest difference between Project Gotham and its Dreamcast predecessor.	9
<b>RalliSport Challenge</b>	Microsoft	This rally racer is one of the best examples of the Xbox's power. More arcade than simulation, with enough depth to please both camps.	8
<b>Robotech: Battlerey</b>	TDK Medactive	Cel-shaded graphics effectively capture the look and feel of the classic 1980s cartoon. Especially enjoyable for fans of the series.	8
<b>Rocky</b>	Ubi Soft	The best boxing game you can get for your Xbox. A technical knock-out really, considering that there's not much competition.	8
<b>Sega GT 2002</b>	Sega	Sega's answer to the Gran Turismo phenomenon. Not quite as expansive in terms of tracks and cars, but even more on the details.	8
<b>Shenmue II</b>	Microsoft	The second chapter of Yu Suzuki's opus sees our hero Ryo traversing the streets of Hong Kong in search of his father's killer.	8
<b>Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams</b>	Konami	A creepy port of a creepy game with a creepy bonus: a creepy extra episode of the creepy story. Play without lights for extra creepiness.	9
<b>Spy Hunter</b>	Midway	A recreation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	8
<b>Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast</b>	LucasArts	As usual, the Star Wars universe inspires great aesthetic design to compliment for Raven Software's solid sense of game design.	9
<b>Steel Battalion</b>	Capcom	If you want to play this game, you'll have to shell out \$200 for the massive controller. For those with the cash, it's well worth it.	8
<b>Tekn Driv</b>	Atari	Race for pink slips on the underground circuit, and live out your Vin Diesel role-playing fantasy. Or just act normal and race cars.	8
<b>The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind</b>	Bethesda	An exhaustive open-ended RPG that essentially allows you to make it up as you go along, with hundreds of people to talk to.	9
<b>The House of the Dead III</b>	Sega	While there's nothing overly wrong with it, HOTD3 just doesn't offer that much that's new. There's no official 1st party light gun, either.	7
<b>TimeSplitters 2</b>	Eidos	Everything good about the (PS2) original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	9
<b>Tom Jam &amp; Earl III</b>	Sega	Tom Jam and Earl haven't seen much action lately, but the funk is strong this time, and it's better to enjoy funk with a partner. Oh yeah.	7
<b>Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon</b>	Ubi Soft	There's not much of a graphical upgrade from the PC version, but the interface and audio is improved. Goes great with Xbox Live.	9
<b>Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell</b>	Ubi Soft	Comparisons to Metal Gear Solid were inevitable. Splinter Cell holds its own, and even outdoes Konami's behemoth at times.	9
<b>Tom Hawk's Pro Skater 3</b>	Activision	If you have to have Tom Hawk 3, improved graphics and framerate and the custom soundtrack option make this the best version to get.	7
<b>Unreal Championship</b>	Atari	Mindless deathmarching with great weapon design and entertaining multiplayer modes. Including the sport-like Bombing Run.	8
<b>World Series Baseball</b>	Sega Sports	Finally gets a franchise mode worth mentioning, along with fantastic visuals and sound. Control is improved, but still somewhat limited.	9

## [BUY!]

### NHL 2K3

➔ Sega Sports needs hand from you, Joe and Jane Consumer! If the company keeps making great sports games like NHL 2K3 but nobody buys them, it can't continue making great sports games. That's bad.



## [AVOID!]

### KAKUTO CHOJIN

➔ A fighting game with absolutely no redeemable features. Sure, there's a four-player mode, but your friends might not be your friends too long if you make them play it. Not stays on the shelf.





# GAMECUBE TOP 50 PARTY ON!

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	OUR RATING
<b>All-Star Baseball 2003</b>	Acclaim	All-Star Baseball '03 is much improved over the buggy '02 effort. Want to get into the franchise mode? Bring a huge memory card.	7
<b>Animal Crossing</b>	Nintendo	The game that never ends, and is based largely on routine chores, yardwork, and interior decorating. So why is it so much fun to play?	9
<b>Beach Spikers</b>	Sega	Easy to pick up and easy to play, a la Virtua Tennis. Like most arcade sports games, it's definitely better as a multiplayer affair.	8
<b>Bombberman Generation</b>	Majesco	A surviving member of the Old School, Bomberman has earned some tenure in the industry. This time he sports a chameleon look.	8
<b>Burnout</b>	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
<b>Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex</b>	Universal	The mascot that would master Mario isn't doing so hot these days, thanks in part to a developer change and stale design.	6
<b>Cubivore</b>	Atlas	A simple but compelling game of reproduction and cannibalism. Plus, you can get "hump points." You know you're interested.	7
<b>Dark Summit</b>	THQ	It's snowboarding set against some sort of nonsense about a secret government plot. The important part is that it's snowboarding.	7
<b>Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2</b>	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, XXX was based on the well-mannered Dave Mirra and actually focused on...get this...biking.	8
<b>Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem</b>	Nintendo	This game, if you let it, will mess with your head. The insanity effects are clever (the first time) and the scenery is downright creepy. Even	8
<b>FIFA 2002</b>	Electronic Arts	though there's always room for improvement, EA's soccer series has been fairly decent. Plus, there's no real alternative yet.	7
<b>GoZilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee</b>	Atari	Godzilla & Co. wrecking cityscapes and each other, with support up to 4-players. What's not to like?	7
<b>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</b>	EA Games	This Potter kid seems to be pretty popular, so the folks at EA decided to make a Zelda-esque adventure based on his magical exploits.	7
<b>Last Kingdoms</b>	EA Games	The Gamecube's first RPG, featuring fast-paced battles, a multiplayer mode, and a well-designed card system. Worth checking out.	7
<b>Luigi's Mansion</b>	Nintendo	We all wanted Mario at launch, and we got this. Like getting socks for Christmas, it's good and comfortable, but not what we wanted.	7
<b>Madden NFL 2002</b>	Electronic Arts	Those who bought the Gamecube version instead of the PS2 edition were treated to roughly the same game. Good for them, though.	7
<b>Mario Party 4</b>	Nintendo	There are few things better in life than three friends, Mario Party, and a healthy flow of alcoholic beverages (if you're legal, of course.)	8
<b>Metroid Prime</b>	EA Games	A new story of D-Day and the ensuing action on the French frontlines. The Gamecube version of the others didn't.	7
<b>NASCAR Thunder 2003</b>	Nintendo	As if they dissected Super Metroid, added a dimension, and put it back together again with slick graphics. In fact, it's exactly like that.	10
<b>NBA 2K2</b>	EA Games	It's apparently the fastest growing "sport" in America, and Thunder 2003 is packed under the hood, including an in-depth career mode.	9
<b>NBA 2K3</b>	Sega	More of a sim than NBA Courtside, but it's the best basketball simulation available. Includes a great game of street ball, as well.	7
<b>NBA Courtside</b>	Sega	Added to this year's version is a slick ESPN interface, an upgraded franchise mode, and a fresh class of rookies.	7
<b>NBA Street</b>	Nintendo	No longer under the Nintendo development umbrella, Left Field's final installment of the Courtside series is a worthy b-ball game.	8
<b>NCAA College Basketball 2K3</b>	EA Sports	The spirit of NBA Jam lives on, but with 3-on-3 instead of 2-on-2. The fact that the multiplayer maxes out at 2 instead of 4 is suspicious.	8
<b>Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2</b>	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities...	6
<b>Pac-Man World 2</b>	EA Games	For some reason, Hot Pursuit 2 runs worse on the Gamecube than it does on the less-powerful PlayStation 2.	7
<b>Phantasy Star Online Episode I &amp; II</b>	Namco	Purists will yell "HERESY!" at the new Pac-Man who can take multiple hits. People who actually enjoy good games will ignore them.	7
<b>Pikmin</b>	Sega	Unhealthily addictive. The pursuit of rare items helps one ignore the somewhat repetitive battle [and the \$9 monthly fee].	9
<b>Resident Evil</b>	Nintendo	Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto got the idea for this quirky strategy game from observing his personal garden. What kind of garden?	7
<b>Resident Evil 2</b>	Capcom	This remake could almost be described as a new game. But is it really Resident Evil without the laughably bad voice acting?	9
<b>Resident Evil 3</b>	Capcom	This one actually is a brand new game, with significant changes such as droppable items and the dirty-sounding partner-swapping.	7
<b>Sega Soccer Slam</b>	Sega	An arcade style soccer game with off-the-wall characters, arenas, and power-ups. And it's still better than Virtua Striker!	8
<b>Skies of Arcadia Legend</b>	Sega	If you missed it on Dreamcast—and many of you did—you've been given a second chance. It's even got new characters.	8
<b>Smuggler's Run: Warzones</b>	Rockstar Games	An enhanced version of Smuggler's Run 2, with new vehicles and maps, and an expanded multiplayer mode with support for 4 players.	8
<b>Sonic Adventure 2: Battle</b>	Sega	Remember when you and your friends held daily Sonic vs. Mario debates? Don't you feel silly now? Dr at least a little old?	7
<b>Sonic Mega Collection</b>	Sega	Sure the Sonic games may have been great, but \$40 may be too steep of an asking price for a collection of old and un-enhanced games.	7
<b>Spider-Man</b>	Activision	Spider-Man, Spider-Man, does whatever a Spider can. Good luck following him with a shoddy camera system and control issues.	6
<b>Star Fox Adventures</b>	Nintendo	Rare's last Nintendo effort took forever, but Star Fox Adventures takes its inspiration from The Legend of Zelda and that ain't bad.	7
<b>Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader</b>	LucasArts	At times, Rogue Leader syncs closely with scenes from the movies. Impressive when you consider it only took 9 months to make.	7
<b>Star Wars: The Clone Wars</b>	LucasArts	All the intense action of the movie, without melodramatic writing and weak acting. As with many GC games, multiplayer is a big draw.	7
<b>Super Mario Sunshine</b>	Nintendo	Maybe not quite as groundbreaking as Super Mario 64 was, but even when Nintendo "misses," they make a big splash.	8
<b>Super Monkey Ball</b>	Sega	Monkeys in balls! An exceptional game based on a simple concept, some of the later levels will eat you for lunch.	8
<b>Super Monkey Ball 2</b>	Sega	Even more monkeys in balls running around for your entertainment! The extra game modes add quite a bit to the simple concept.	8
<b>Super Smash Bros. Melee</b>	Nintendo	A Nintendo fanatic's dream, if only for the exhaustive gallery of collectible Nintendoanoids. Plus, you can beat the crap out of Jigglypuff.	9
<b>TimeSplitters 2</b>	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	7
<b>Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3</b>	Activision	For those who have the Dual Shock firmly hardwired into their psyche, switching over to the oddly-shaped GameCube can prove difficult.	7
<b>Virtua Striker 2002</b>	Sega	Arcade soccer that was all the rage in Japan, despite severely limited control over player and ball movement. Looks nice, though.	6
<b>Wave Race: Blue Storm</b>	Nintendo	Nintendo messed with the controls when they didn't need any messing with, making Blue Storm pale in comparison to its predecessor.	6
<b>WWE Wrestlingmania X8</b>	THQ	Ratings have cooled and Stone Cold has had some run-ins with John Law. This is irrelevant, as wrestling games will always sell.	6
<b>X-Men: Next Dimension</b>	Activision	If you absolutely must have an X-Men fighting game, this is your best bet. Better fighters exist, but they don't feature Wolverine.	7

## [BUY!]

### PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

➔ You're not really doing much else with that GameCube modem at the moment, so you might as well hang on a server. The good news is that you can finally play on the Japanese servers.



## [AVOID!]

### EVOLUTION WORLDS

➔ The "worlds" referred to in the title are nothing but Dreamcast ports of the first two Evolution games—boring low-grade dungeon crawling with no discernable payoff. Wait for Skies of Arcadia.





# PS1 TOP 25 THE LEGEND WILL NEVER DIE

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	OUR RATING
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	Konami	Like Super Metroid, with vampires instead of Metroids. And it was on the PlayStation. A certifiable classic.	9
Chrono Cross	Square EA	It wasn't quite the Chrono Trigger sequel most people expected, but it's a magnificent game by its own right.	10
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	Codemasters	Americans might be slow in recognizing the name, but race fans know that the Colin McRae games were and are among the best.	9
Crash Team Racing	Sony	Countless mascot racers that flooded store shelves during the PlayStation era, and Crash Team Racing was the only good one. Really.	9
Einhander	Sony	"Einhander" is German for "awesome 2D shooter that should have sold way more than it did." That, or "one-handed." We're not sure.	9
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	We're not exactly sure how 2 games out of a series of 9 constitutes an "anthology," but they're good games nonetheless.	9
Final Fantasy IX	Square EA	The crystals return to the series, along with a four-member party, blue magic, and black mages. Biggs and Wedge, sadly, do not.	10
Final Fantasy VII	Sony	Brought RPGs into the western spotlight, and contained the most debated plot twist of an era. We won't spoil it, but no, you can't.	9
Final Fantasy VIII	Square EA	Things were more "real" this time around. As real as chocobos, guardian forces, and "time compression" could be, anyways.	9
Gran Turismo	Sony	Of course it seems foolish now, but the replays had some of us doing double-takes to make sure we weren't watching real race footage.	9
Gran Turismo 2	Sony	More tracks, more cars, more races, more cars, more cars, more modes, and more cars. The second lap was even better than the first.	10
Hadden NFL 2001	Electronic Arts	Don't call it a comeback, he's been here for years. Play a version of Madden where the Rams could actually win with Kurt Warner.	9
Metal Gear Solid	Konami	Hideo Kojima's chameleonic classic continues to impress, and featured the first video to unofficially win E3's Game of Show. Twice.	10
NFL GameDay '97	Sony	Helped to start the football crown away from Madden (only to fumble it right back a few years later).	9
NHL '98	Electronic Arts	While still a decent game of hockey, this is one of the series' brighter spots. Played in college dorms throughout the country.	9
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	An unlikely hero rises up to overthrow big business. It's very clever; the political overtones are great for that last-minute term paper.	9
Point Blank	Namco	If Time Crisis taught us to be killers, then surely Point Blank taught us how to shoot up a car before it fell on us from 40 stories up.	9
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	Zombies running amok in Raccoon City, more B-movie video acting running amok on your speakers. Enough to fill 2 discs this time!	9
Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	Plenty of cars, silky-smooth graphics, and of all things, a story mode. Best played with the Jeycon controller.	9
Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom	Another well-executed arcade port, and arguably the best version of Street Fighter to grace the system.	9
Teiken 3	Namco	An amazing conversion, given the difference between the arcade and PlayStation hardware at the time. Set the standard for bonuses.	10
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Activision	Some say it's the best installment of the series in terms of control, music, and course design. So we, actually.	10
Twisted Metal 2	Sony	The granddaddy of vehicular combat games. Sweetooth is damning evidence that clowns and anything related to clowning is evil.	9
Worms Armageddon	Haribo Int.	A highly addictive turn-based strategy game, and a practical alternative to throwing grenades at the sidewalk after a rainshower.	9
You Don't Know Jack	Sierra	The ultimate judge of useless-yet-impressive knowledge, assuming you still can't find your Star Wars edition of Trivial Pursuit.	9

# GAME BOY ADVANCE TOP 25 LIST ADVANCE

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Advance Wars	Nintendo	Turn-based military strategy that should be a part of everyone's GBA library. Once you get sucked in, it's hard to pull yourself away.	8
Baseball Advance	THQ	There's only four stadiums and there's no multiplayer, but it's still a great game of baseball.	8
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon	Konami	Castlevania was meant to be played in two dimensions, and this game shows why. A complex card system governs your special abilities.	9
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance	Konami	The second Castlevania game is one of the best reasons to own a Game Boy Advance. The colors are brighter and the bosses are bigger.	10
ChuChu Rocket	Sega	Highly addictive and highly cute puzzle action from Sega. Best played with friends.	9
ESPN Golf	Konami	It's always a good idea to have a golf game as part of your portable library. ESPN Golf is that game.	8
F-Zero Maximum Velocity	Nintendo	An enhanced port of the classic SNES racer with improved graphics and support for 4 players.	9
Golden Sun	Nintendo	A deep combat engine and brilliant graphics make this the best RPG available on the GBA.	9
GT Advance Championship	THQ	A great-looking and playing racer with one major drawback: a tedious password save system. If you can get past that, well, good for you.	9
Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land	Nintendo	A remake of the NES classic Kirby's Adventure with updated graphics and multiplayer support.	8
Klonoa: Empire of Dreams	Namco	Straying from the original formula, this Klonoa is more of a puzzle game than a platformer with great graphics and sound.	9
Konami Krazy Racers	Konami	A Mario Kart-esque mascot racer filled with classic Konami characters like Dracula, Goemon and MG's Ninja.	9
Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past	Nintendo	Invite three friends and you've got a bona fide Zelda party. Drink Red Medicine till you puke and skinny dip in Lake Hyli!	9
Lunar Legend	Ubi Soft	The anime cutscenes and superb voice acting may be gone, but the great gameplay and story of Lunar remain intact.	8
Mario Kart: Super Circuit	Nintendo	A balanced blend of Super Mario Kart and Mario Kart 64 that even includes all the tracks from the former.	8
Mega Man Zero	Capcom	A difficult yet engaging installment of the X sidestory played as Zero, who is equipped with an arm cannon and beam saber.	8
Metroid Fusion	Nintendo	The follow-up to Super Metroid is 8 years late, but the wait was well worth it. An adventure that ends way too quickly.	9
Phantasy Star Collection	Sega	Straightforward classic RPG action that's been overlooked for far too long. Includes Phantasy Star 1, 2, and 3.	9
Puyo Pop	THQ	The series has been around a while, but this is the first American portable version of the puzzler based on colored blobs.	8
Rayman Advance	Ubi Soft	Rayman is just as good in 2D as he is in 3D. It looks great and provides a decent challenge.	8
Super Mario Advance	Nintendo	Aside from the odd naming system, you can't really complain about a portable version of Super Mario Bros. 2.	9
Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2	Nintendo	There's really not much else that can be said except "portable Super Mario World" and "you should buy it."	9
Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis	Atlus	An incredibly deep strategy RPG with a branching storyline and a rewarding battle system.	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	It's amazing how they managed to cram Tony Hawk into a cartridge, while keeping the essence of the game true to the console version.	9
Yoshi's Islands Super Mario Advance 3	Nintendo	Yoshi is the star of this show, one of the greatest 2D platformers ever put to silicon. There are even a couple of new bonus levels.	9

NEXT ISSUE...

# Z.O.E.: THE 2ND RUNNER

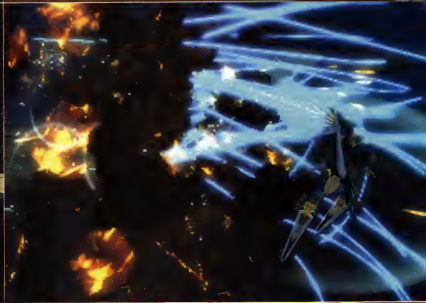
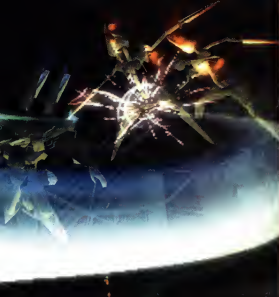
Exclusive review: *GMR* puts you in the Frame with Konami's robots—and—two-hundred-heat-seeking-missiles action epic.

PLUS: *GMR* investigates the Xbox2 rumors (wait, there's a pattern here), and reviews Aero Elite, the mutha truckin' King of Route 66 for PS2, the possibly disastrous Kung Fu Chaos for Xbox, and platform hopeful Vexx, plus leads off with a baseball review roundup. As if that isn't enough (and, let's face it, it's not), you get a super-sized preview of Final Fantasy X-2 and first hands-on with Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow for GBA. Plus, lots more that's just too exciting to talk about. Oh, all right then, a review of Def Jam Vendetta! So, there you go.

Oh, and Andrew Pfister.

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HE'S OLD! HE'S PISSED!

# GAME GEEZER

THE OLD MAN TALKS ABOUT...SOMETHING.  
WE WEREN'T REALLY PAYING ATTENTION.

➔ Okay, you dumb kids. Gather around grandpa's knees here, pipe down, and let me tell you a story about the good old days of gaming. Back before everything sucked! Wait a minute. Someone grab my teeth in that jar over there. Can't rightly pay attention to what I'm saying with my gums smackin' together like this. Damn dentists.

"Hey, Game Geezer—can you hurry it up? We've got things to do."

No, I can't "hurry up." That's the whole problem with you kids today. Attention span of mesquiteos. Can't focus on anything for longer than two minutes. Let me tell you something: I pity your girlfriends. If you got 'em. Because the way you boys rush around, you can't possibly be lovin' 'em right.

Same thing goes with your video games. You're just not lovin' 'em right. You barely buy one game before you're already moving on to the next one. Am I right? Course I am. That wasn't a real question so keep quiet and let an old man talk.

I bet you have *Metrod Prime* 1/3rd finished, forgotten, and collecting dust already.

And how long were you looking forward to that one? Six months? You pre-ordered it, picked it up on day one, played the bejeebus out of it for maybe two weeks—and then forgot about it. And how many games are just like that one, sitting around your house right now, unfinished and unplayed? Yet you don't care, do you? Don't look around! I'm talking to you, boy! Yet here you are, looking through this very magazine, lustin' after something new to buy again.

Bah. Pathetic. I should have died ten years ago to spare myself from this nonsense. Why, when I was a boy, we picked one game, and we stuck with it! For months! We loved those games. We didn't just toss 'em away after a day like yesterday's newspaper. We knew a thing or two about loyalty, and commitment, and getting a job done. Not like you punks today. Soon as a game gets tough on you, you lose interest.

"But Game Geezer, we're just too busy too—"

Nancy! All of you! Let me tell you something for nothing. Any fool can start a game. A real gamer is the one who finishes it. Instead of flipping through this magazine

looking for new games to throw your money away on, why don't you highlight your fanny back over to *Metrod* or *Splinter Cell* or *GTA 3* or whatever other games you've been too much of sissy to finish, and finish them first!

That's the whole problem with this country. Everybody's so busy looking for the next cheap thrill, they can't appreciate what's right under their noses. You think you'd be standing here today, reading this drabble, if your forefathers had been sitting in their foxholes, daydreaming like little girls about the next *Zelda* game, rather than keeping their eyes and minds focused on taking down Jerry?

So put this magazine down. Quit looking for new games. Go to your room and finish what you started. And knock first before you come bothering me and Mrs. Geezer. We've got some long, slow lovin' to attend to. Soon as I take these teeth back out. 🦷



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Sometimes the only  
way to fight evil  
is to become it.



LARA CROFT  
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out of the tombs. into hell.



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